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LOCATING EL GRECO IN LATE SIXTEENTH-CENTURY ROME:
ART and LEARNING, RIVALRY and PATRONAGE

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Submitted for the degree of Doctor
of Philosophy, July 2017

Signed declaration

I declare that the work presented in the thesis is my own

Ioanna Goniotaki

ABSTRACT

Much has been written about the artistic output of Domenicos Theotocopoulos during his time in Spain, but few scholars have examined his works in Venice and even fewer have looked at the years he spent in Rome. This may be in part attributed to the lack of firm documentary evidence regarding his activities there and to the small corpus of works that survive from his Italian period, many of which are furthermore controversial. The present study focuses on Domenicos' Roman years and questions the traditional notion that he was a spiritual painter who served the principles of the Counter Reformation.

To support such a view I have looked critically at the Counter Reformation, which I consider more as an amalgam of diverse and competitive institutions and less as an austere movement that strangled the freedom of artistic expression. I contend, moreover, that Domenicos' acquaintance with Cardinal Alessandro Farnese's librarian, Fulvio Orsini, was seminal for the artist, not only because it brought him into closer contact with Rome's most refined circles, but principally because it helped Domenicos to assume the persona of 'pictor doctus', the learned artist, following the example of another of Fulvio's friends, Pirro Ligorio. The elitist art that resulted from Domenicos' collaboration with Orsini, represented, for example, in his paintings of *Boy Lighting a Candle* and the *Healing of the Blind*, was partly responsible for the Greek painter's failure to engage the interest of Cardinal Farnese, in whose palace he stayed for two years, 1570-1572. But Domenicos was determined to establish a career in Rome, as his registration in the painters' guild, the Accademia di San Luca, in September of 1572, confirms. Although he ultimately failed in this respect, the time he spent in the city was decisive for his understanding of both ancient and modern art, and played a fundamental role in his later artistic development in Spain.

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In memory of my dear husband Zach

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INTRODUCTION

When Domenicos Theotocopoulos died in Toledo in 1614, few, even among his family and friends, would have predicted the rise in his reputation centuries later. From Carl Justi's chapter on the painter in his monograph on Velázquez (1888) at the end of the nineteenth century, to *The Origins of El Greco: Icon Painting in Venetian Crete* in New York in 2009-2010, and the more recent *El Greco of Toledo* in Toledo and Madrid in 2014, art historians have repeatedly attempted to understand his intellectual development and interpret his artistic output. The finding of a signed icon in Syros (1983) and the unearthing of documents concerning his and his brother's presence in Crete and Venice (1975 and 1995 respectively) gave renewed impetus to research into the painter's activities before his arrival in Spain. Yet probing into El Greco's early years has proven particularly problematic because surviving documents – four from Crete¹, one from Venice² and five from Rome – have revealed little about his personality or important issues such as who his master in Crete was, how many pictures he painted before he arrived in Italy, who his patrons in Venice and Rome were, and how many pictures he executed in those cities. It is not surprising, therefore, that scholars have shown limited interest in the painter's Roman sojourn, which started so promisingly at the household of Cardinal Alessandro Farnese in 1570.

While neither the output of his Cretan nor Italian phases seem to have been extensive, his Spanish period was definitely a prolific one. Based on thorough assessments of these pictures, historians and scholars have seen El Greco as representative of the Castilian spirit of his era, a mystic, or a religious painter of the

¹ N.M. Panagiotakes, *El Greco: The Cretan Years*, Engl. transl. J.C. Davis, Surrey, 2009, pp. 21-25, 29-30, 34-35; N.M. Panayotakis, 'Manoussos the Pirate: 1571-1572', in *El Greco in Italy and Italian Art: Proceedings of the International Symposium*, Rethymno, 22-24 Sept. 1995, Rethymno, 1999, pp. 17- 21.

² M. Constantoudaki, 'Dominicos Thèotocopoulos (El Greco) de Candie á Venise. Documents Inédits (1566-1568)', *Thesaurismata*, 12, 1975, pp. 292-308, reprinted in *El Greco: Documents on His Life and Work*, ed. N. Hadjinicolaou, Rethymno, 1990, pp. 32-41; M. Constantoudaki, «Ο Δομήνικος Θεοτοκόπουλος (El Greco) από το Χάνδακα στη Βενετία: ανέκδοτα έγγραφα (1566-1568)», *Δελτίον της εν Αθήναις χριστιανικής αρχαιολογικής εταιρείας*, η', 1975-1976, pp. 55-71; Panagiotakes, *El Greco-The Cretan Years*, p. 34. According to a document in the Italian State Archives of Venice dated August 18, 1568, the Duke of Crete had ordered that the merchant Manolis Dacypri, named Mazapeta, had three days to return some drawings to Georgios Sideros or Calapodas, which the latter had received from the painter Menegis Theotocopoulos in Venice. While almost nothing is known about Mazapeta, the name of Calapodas (d. 1581) was fairly familiar to the geographical circles of Candia.

Spanish Counter Reformation³. The extraordinary and profound transformation of his art perplexed scholars who postulated a number of elaborate theories that attempted to explain it. The rediscovery of El Greco came around 1900, when art history was being established as an academic discipline. As early as 1888 the German art historian Carl Justi included in his *Diego Velázquez und sein Jahrhundert* a chapter on El Greco which initiated a new interest in the scholarly studies of the painter. Justi's treatment contained many accurate observations about the painter, including the correct date of his death and a list of his works from Domenicos' Italian journey. Subsequent studies began to re-evaluate El Greco's work in terms of modernism: Julius Meier-Graefe, for instance, regarded El Greco as the precursor of Cézanne, stating in his *Spanische Reise* (Berlin, 1910) that 'every bit of [his work] is painted as if by a landscape painter, by a Cézanne who lets the form emerge from his tones and precise in all details as if Ingrès' hand had been at work'⁴. Having spent some time on the Iberian Peninsula, Meier-Graefe would have been well aware of Manuel Bartolomé Cossío's book on El Greco, which had come out only two years earlier in 1908, and contributed to the reappraisal of the painter in Spain⁵. Perhaps it is not a coincidence that the Casa y Museo del Greco in Toledo opened in the same year with the publication of Meier-Graefe's book⁶.

It is interesting that although the reassessment of El Greco in different places – France, Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom - was prompted by different motives, it began around the same time. Apparently, Domenicos' deviations from the canon, or the supposed 'aberrations' in his art - including the glowing colours of his work, the use of light, the unusual treatment of space that departed from the conventional background narratives of the Italian painters, and the elongation of his figures - were interpreted by the modernists and the early expressionists as virtues,

³ J. Álvarez Lopera, 'The Construction of a Painter: A Century of Searching for and Interpreting El Greco' in *El Greco: Identity and Transformation, Crete. Italy. Spain*, exh. cat., ed. J. Álvarez Lopera, Madrid-Rome-Athens, Milan, 1999, pp. 23-53.

⁴ J. Meier-Graefe, *Spanische Reise*, Berlin, 1910, p. 84; for the Engl. transl. I followed P. G. Berman, 'The Invention of History: Julius Meier-Graefe, German Modernism, and the Genealogy of Genius', *Studies in the History of Art: Symposium Papers XXXI: Imagining Modern German Culture: 1889-1910*, 53, 1996, pp. 95-105, esp. p. 100.

⁵ A fundamental step towards this direction was also the exhibition that the Prado Museum dedicated to the artist in 1902; L. Ruiz Gómez, 'From Oblivion to Glory: El Greco in the Museum del Prado' in *El Greco and Modernity*, exh. cat., ed. B. Wismer & M. Scholz-Hänsel, Düsseldorf, 2012, pp. 334-341.

⁶ M. Scholz-Hänsel, 'Like a Bolt from the Blue? Ambiguities, Productive Misunderstandings and Constructed Perspectives in the Reception of El Greco' in *El Greco and Modernity*, pp. 196-211; V. Schroeder, 'Julius Meier-Graefe's Greco: the Artist as a Figure of Redemption in the Chaos of Modernity', *ibid*, pp. 362-373.

worthy of a truly great master. In 1913 Roger Fry acknowledged his ‘genius, his strangeness and isolation in the history of renaissance and modern art’, linking his art not only to ‘the fervent and exaggerated religiosity of the 16th and 17th-century Spain’, but also to ‘the most modern researches into the nature of expressive form’⁷. Three years earlier, Maurice Denis associated El Greco with modernism when he wrote that ‘there is something of El Greco in him [Cézanne]’⁸. Significantly, the idea of El Greco as the forerunner of modern art went hand in hand with the idea of him as a mystical painter and the interpreter of the Spanish soul. Although Max Dvořák was the first who related Domenicos to mannerism, he thought that the painter lived in a world of crisis that arose from the collapse of Renaissance faith in reason and nature⁹. Dvořák, who approached the history of art as the history of spirit, thought that this crisis led to the abandonment of naturalism and to the cultivation of spiritualism in catholic countries like France and Spain. In other words, Dvořák thought that a crisis in values provoked a spiritual rebirth in artists, and this tendency became evident in the late works of Michelangelo, Tintoretto, and El Greco, whose art was the climax of this current¹⁰. Despite the deficiencies of Dvořák’s thesis regarding Mannerism as the style of a period in crisis, his contribution was important because he situated El Greco as a leading representative of Mannerism, abandoning the view of the painter as an unclassified artistic personality isolated in art history. Yet Domenicos’ personal painting style, as well as his extraordinary transformation, cannot be understood outside a historical-cultural context, and this included the refined environment of Rome, as I shall discuss.

Later in the twentieth century, Domenicos’ mysticism was again discussed by scholars, Harold E. Wethey, in his famous *El Greco and His School*¹¹, and Richard G. Mann. The latter, in his study of El Greco’s altarpieces for the Seminary of the Incarnation in Madrid¹², clearly stated that the paintings of the retable ‘visualize the mystical visions and meditations of the Blessed Alonso de Orozco, founder of the

⁷ R. Fry, ‘Some Pictures by El Greco’, *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 24, 1913, pp. 3-5.

⁸ M. Denis, ‘Cézanne-II’, *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 16, 1910, pp. 275-280, esp. p. 280; the article had been translated by Roger Fry.

⁹ M. Dvořák, *Kunstgeschichte als Geistesgeschichte*, Munich, (1st ed. 1924), 1928, pp. 261-276.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 275; Álvarez Lopera, ‘The Construction of a Painter’, pp. 46-47.

¹¹ H.E. Wethey, *El Greco and His School*, Princeton 1962, vol. I, p. 57: “El Greco more than any other master illustrates the return to the mediaeval Scholastic belief that a work of art comes into being through the knowledge of God rather from experience in the physical world”.

¹² R.G. Mann, *El Greco and His Patrons: Three Major Projects*, Cambridge, 1986, pp. 47-110.

seminary'¹³. As for the interpretation of El Greco as a Counter-Reformation artist, Werner Weisbach and his book *Der Barock als Kunst der Gegenreformation* (Berlin, 1921) should be held primarily responsible for such a theory, followed by a number of other scholars, including Hugo Kehrer, August L. Mayer and Ellis Waterhouse¹⁴. More recently, David Davies in a series of articles from the 1980s onwards, sought to rehabilitate the Counter Reformation as a period of intense spiritual regeneration, and consequently to relate Domenicos' works to the rites of the Catholic Church and the teachings of its reformed exponents¹⁵. Thus, he outlined the personality of a painter who was more spiritual than pragmatic, a painter who executed his pictures conscientiously following the dogmas of the Church, and the religious ideas of the early Greek Fathers, as well as the Spanish mystics, including St. John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila¹⁶. This approach, however, is problematic for two reasons: first, it rests on the assumption that the Counter Reformation was a homogeneous movement powerful enough to guarantee peace and security among the laity, which was not the case, as will be demonstrated; and second, it suggests that the influence of the Counter Reformation was exerted through the specific prescriptions on art promulgated by the Council of Trent, and expanded in the writings of high-ranking advocates, such as Carlo Borromeo and Gabriele Paleotti. Again, this is not easily demonstrable. And yet, this remains a popular viewpoint with recent studies following a similar pattern. Andrew Casper, for example, in his 2014 study, claims that El Greco's post-Byzantine religiosity resurfaced again in his devotional paintings in Italy, allowing him to respond more effectively to the new emphasis placed on the efficacy of images by the Council of Trent (1563)¹⁷. But, as I shall argue, Domenicos' highly personal pictures, and particularly those dating from his Italian sojourn, do not neatly fit into these patterns.

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 47.

¹⁴ Álvarez Lopera, 'The Construction of a Painter', pp. 50-51.

¹⁵ D. Davies, 'Washington National Gallery: El Greco of Toledo', (review), *The Burlington Magazine*, 124, 1982, pp. 530-535; D. Davies, 'The Influence of Christian Neoplatonism on the Art of El Greco', in *El Greco of Crete: Exhibition on the Occasion of the 450th anniversary of his Birth*, exh. cat., ed. N. Hadjinicolaou, Iraklion, 1990, pp. 21-55; D. Davies, 'The Ascent of the Mind to God: El Greco's Religious Imagery and Spiritual Reform in Spain', in *El Greco: Identity and Transformation*, pp. 187-215; for a more recent approach see M.B. Hall, *The Sacred Image in the Age of Art*, New Haven & London, 2011, p. 228, where the author attempts to reconcile the ideals of the intellectual painter with that of the promoter of religious experience.

¹⁶ Davies, 'The Influence of Christian Neoplatonism on the Art of El Greco', in *El Greco of Crete*, pp. 21-55.

¹⁷ A.R. Casper, *Art and the Religious Image in El Greco's Italy*, Pennsylvania, 2014.

My purpose is to revise the above, rather narrow, view of El Greco as a faithful defender of the Counter Reformation, or more recently as an ‘icon painter in Italy’ executing ‘artful icons’ according to the decrees of the Council of Trent¹⁸, and to present him instead as an exceptionally sophisticated, highly intellectual, cosmopolitan, down-to-earth artist, definitely more pragmatic than spiritually-minded. To argue cogently for his new profile, I have chosen to concentrate on the least studied phase of his career, his Roman sojourn. More specifically, I will argue that Rome, one of the most important artistic centres of the period, played an instrumental role in the refinement of the painter by offering him first-hand experience of its antique monuments and the opportunity to gain extensive knowledge of the work of contemporary artists. Rome also provided him with a particularly erudite environment, as he lived in close contact with a select circle of scholars, who met in the palaces and villas of the city’s most powerful men.

As the subtitle of the study indicates, I shall also endeavour to demonstrate, presenting a fresh view of his work, how important the interest in classical studies and writings became for Domenicos, and how decisive the influence of Italian humanism was on his intellectual and artistic development. Despite the ideals of poverty and humility promoted by the Counter Reformation, collecting antiquities of every type and reading the works of ancient authors were still important aspects of intellectual life in late sixteenth-century Rome. And collections were forums for the promotion of visual culture, spaces designed to ensure the continuation of an endless ‘dialogue’ with antiquity. After his arrival in Rome in 1570 Domenicos found a place in the city’s antiquarian circles. Through Giulio Clovio’s successful intervention, the newcomer was granted permission to take up residence in Palazzo Farnese¹⁹. Like Cardinal Niccolò Ridolfi’s palace, which had earlier acquired a reputation as a ‘sapientiae domicilium’, the Farnese Palace was frequented by eminent scholars and was adorned with some of the most highly admired ancient statues in Rome. The *Farnese Bull* and the *Farnese Hercules*, together with the *Flora* and the *Callipygian Venus*, were the core of the palace’s collection, which also included busts, inscriptions,

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 9, 11.

¹⁹ A. Ronchini, ‘Giulio Clovio’, *Atti e memorie delle RR. Deputazioni di storia patria per le provincie modenesi e parmensi*, iii, 1865, pp. 259-270, reprinted in *El Greco: Documents of His Life and Work*, ed. N. Hadjinicolaou, Rethymno, 1990, pp. 83-89.

cameos, medals, books and manuscripts, as well as paintings²⁰. Alongside the rich Cardinal Farnese, the less well-off antiquarian Fulvio Orsini had also built up an important collection of books and art objects over the years, reflecting the diversity of his interests and the breadth of the Roman market.

In order to understand the edifying role of manuscript and antique collections, including that of Farnese, which became a focal point for both ‘letterati’ and artists like El Greco, we must move in two directions: outward and inward. On the one hand, the wider political shifts in Rome’s foreign policy towards the conquered Greeks, helped to rekindle the interest in Greek letters. An important example of this was the formation of the Holy League, which was consistently encouraged by Pius V (1566-1572) and led to the Christian victory in the naval battle of Lepanto (7 October 1571), off the coast of western Greece. Despite the hazy future of the League after 1572, the great victory over the Ottomans at Lepanto renewed the interest of the Christian forces in the eastern Mediterranean, which saw Greece as the natural limit against the further advance of the Ottoman threat in the West. On the other hand, we should also acknowledge the socio-economic preconditions that shaped the interest in classical ideals, and generated the impressive collections of artefacts. Thus the formation and accessibility of the Farnese collection and library serve as a microcosm of a larger cultural transformation. The collection may also have reflected the cultural pretensions of Cardinal Farnese, whose principal concerns were probably first to smooth out his relations with Pius V, and then to create a new political profile for the next conclave.

Rome was unique for being not only the site of ancient Rome, a place where ancient marble fragments and inscriptions could be unearthed and studied, but also the seat of the papal court, which constituted a source of international influence and drew diplomatic representatives from all over Europe. Archaeological study, art and letters, and the collection of texts and images were used to convey learning, status and splendour to both the owners and the ‘letterati’. And while the pursuit of knowledge through the accumulation of antiquities and books was common among the cultured elite of Rome, it was less common among the artists. El Greco’s extensive library in

²⁰ P. De Nolhac, ‘Les collections de Fulvio Orsini. Une galerie de peinture au XVI.e siècle’, *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, xxix, 1884, pp. 427-436 ; B. Jestaz, ‘Le collezioni Farnese di Roma’, in *I Farnese: Arte e Collezionismo*, exh. cat., ed. L. Fornari Schianchi & N. Spinosa, Rome, 1995, pp. 49-67; F. Haskell & N. Penny, *Taste and the Antique: The Lure of Classical Sculpture, 1500-1900*, New Haven & London, 1981, pp. 11-12, 166, 217, 230, 317, figs. 85, 113, 118, 168 respectively.

Toledo is unusually erudite and suggests that the painter could have read ancient Greek texts in their original language, which raises the question of when he first came into serious contact with these ancient texts. As he was attached to the Farnese court, and lived in the Farnese Palace, a highly erudite milieu where Greek studies were particularly prized, it seems likely that it was here that Domenicos was introduced to the new concept of learning that constituted a sort of meeting point between word and image. All of which impacted on the way he presented himself later, in Spain: as a learned artist and a gentleman.

Among the most important contacts that Domenicos established in Rome was his relationship with Orsini, who came to possess several paintings by the Cretan's hand. Fulvio's enthusiasm for antiquity and his extensive knowledge of ancient sources appear to have had a great impact on the painter's literary choices. He might well have introduced El Greco to his acquaintances among the cultural elite and accompanied him around the ancient marvels of Rome, as he had done with other visitors before²¹. Domenicos, who was already an educated man²², knowledgeable about his art and seriously attracted to learning, became receptive to the scholar's influence. Under his guidance the painter had the opportunity to study the ancient texts anew, and acquire copies by authors, such as Homer, Xenophon, Isocrates and Demosthenes, which later appeared in the inventory of his library²³. Yet it would be wrong to suppose that Orsini was the only one in the Farnese household who exerted an influence on the painter. As we shall see, Mattheos Devaris, a scholar of unusual acumen and a graduate of the Greek Gymnasium in Rome²⁴, was also part of these circles and, as a compatriot of Domenicos, would have held a particular fascination for the painter. The erudition of both Orsini and Devaris, along with their experience as lifelong courtiers, would have helped the Cretan face the intellectual and social challenges of the competitive environment of the city. Echoes of El Greco's artistic

²¹ W. Stenhouse, 'Visitors, Display, and Reception in the Antiquity Collections of Late-Renaissance Rome', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 58, 2005, pp. 397-434, esp. pp. 406-414.

²² Panagiotakes, *El Greco: The Cretan Years*, pp. 80-83.

²³ F. de Borja de San Román y Fernández, *El Greco en Toledo*, Madrid, 1910, pp. 195-196 in *El Greco: Documents on His Life and Work*, ed. N. Hadjinicolaou, Rethymno, 1990, pp. 273-274.

²⁴ Aldus Manutius used to call the Greek Gymnasium in Rome 'Academy', Marcus Mousurus called it 'Lascaris' Academy', Petros Devaris 'Greek School', and other scholars 'Greek College'; V. Fanelli, 'Il Ginnasio greco di Leone X a Roma', *Studi romani*, ix, 1961, p. 384. For Devaris' scholarly activities, P. Paschini, 'Un ellenista del Cinquecento: Nicolò Majorano', in *Cinquecento romano e riforma cattolica*, Rome, 1958, p. 226.

pursuits during this period are found in the Orsini and Farnese inventories, which list nine pictures by his hand.

It was in this scholarly environment that Domenicos spent the first two years of his time in Rome, an artistically interesting and intellectually productive period. The painter began to approach art as an intellectual activity acquired by learning and training rather than a handicraft following a master's example. His familiarity with the Roman 'letterati', which helped him to attain a higher degree of self-consciousness, brought a new level of accomplishment to his art. The insight we gain from his Roman works and his assumption of the professional identity of the 'doctus artifex', the learned artist, which had, not long before, emerged fully-blown in the shape of Pirro Ligorio, enables us to trace the gradual transformation of an icon painter from Crete into a 'great philosopher', as he was described by Francisco Pacheco in his *Arte de la pintura* (Seville, 1649)²⁵. To interpret his remarkable cultural and artistic development, I have treated his Roman period as the product of a complex interaction and interweaving of historical forces, involving not only the artist and his patrons, but also the larger religious context of the Counter Reformation, the social and political setting of Rome, the accomplishments of his fellow artists, and the pursuits of his humanist friends during the last quarter of the sixteenth century.

In making this argument, indirect interpretive strategies have been applied. One oblique angle from which I have approached Domenicos' artistic development is biographical. Reconstructing his professional life in Rome in the decade of the 1570s appears to offer an orderly picture, as it fills out his physical presence in the city and traces his gradual artistic and social transformation. Another tactic has been to argue by analogy to other artists who were in Rome at the time. The activities of the latter provide points of comparison with Domenicos on a range of topics, from cultivating his courtly skills and conduct to organising his workshop and teaching his apprentices.

As very few traces of Domenicos' professional life in Rome have come to light, I mainly rely on two kinds of evidence: that afforded by the works themselves, which illuminate his artistic development and shed some light on the people with whom Domenicos came into contact at various stages of his career in the city; and that

²⁵ F. Pacheco, *Arte de la pintura*, Seville, 1649, p. 446; for the Engl. transl. of the passage see J. Brown, 'El Greco and Toledo' in *El Greco of Toledo*, exh. cat., ed. J. Brown, Madrid/Washington/Toledo Ohio/Dallas, 1982, p. 110: "It was not only the ancients who elevated themselves by erudition. In our own century, there have been learned men not only in painting, but also in humane letters, such as Dominico Greco, who was a great philosopher and wit, and wrote on the subject of painting".

which survives in the form of primary contemporary documentation. To these I have added the painter's 'postille' on Vasari's *Vite* and Vitruvius' *De architectura libri decem* (*Ten books on Architecture*) which, although dating from 1590s, reflect ideas evidently shaped much earlier; I also refer to the extensive collection of books which was listed in the inventory of El Greco's possessions at the time of his death. As all the above are precious first-hand witnesses of the painter's thoughts and convictions, I draw on them quite often. His library in Toledo in particular must have been considered exceptional for artists working in Spain, since the Cretan owned a large number of books by classical authors²⁶. Although it is likely that some of these books were bought in Spain, it is eminently plausible that he obtained a number of them during his Roman sojourn, where he could have taken advantage of his connections to cultivated bibliophiles. In any event, the library reflects the profile of a highly cultivated man, a 'painter-philosopher', who formed his library not only as a means of raising his status as an artist, but also as a repository of knowledge and pleasure.

The following study comprises nine chapters: the first of which provides an outline of the nature of the Counter Reformation and of humanism in sixteenth-century Rome, and considers how antiquarian studies stimulated artists in their efforts to raise their intellectual and social status. The second analyses El Greco's output just before he decided to leave Venice for Rome, and investigates the influence of the Grimani circle on his development. It also argues that the painter cultivated an early interest in central Italian art as well as in architecture, and explores the possibility that Domenicos came to Rome to study them both. Chapter three examines the letter by which Giulio Clovio introduced the painter to Cardinal Farnese and considers Clovio's relationship with El Greco, while speculating on the person who acted as a middleman between the painter and the miniaturist. The fourth chapter, *The Artistic Milieu of Rome: Friendships, Rivalries and Theoretical Positions*, is concerned with the artistic environment of Rome during 1570s, and the painter's social and artistic interaction. Chapter five examines the personality of the restless polymath Fulvio Orsini, and investigates his collection and his friendships with important 'letterati' in order to understand the broad range of his interests and tastes. It also traces the gradual formation of Domenicos' new identity as a learned painter under Orsini's influence. Chapter six discusses how the painter's initial success turned to

²⁶ De Borja de San Román y Fernández, *El Greco en Toledo*, pp. 195-196, in *El Greco: Documents on His Life and Work*, pp. 273-274.

disillusionment in the summer of 1572, when he was asked to leave the Farnese Palace²⁷, and assesses the possible reasons why Domenicos failed to accommodate himself to Cardinal Farnese's requirements and to gain employment under his aegis. In chapter seven, I turn to Domenicos' registration in the Accademia di San Luca, speculating as to where and how he organised his workshop. Evidently, Domenicos, like many of his peers, paid his fees to the artists' guild and went about hiring two pupil-assistants²⁸. The timing was opportune for setting up a business, largely because the Holy Year of 1575 was approaching. Pope Gregory XIII, who saw the celebration of the Jubilee as an opportunity to present the unity and restoration of the Church, encouraged his agents, cardinals, religious orders and lay confraternities to restore the dilapidated churches that were in their jurisdiction, and to complete languishing decorative programmes. The next chapter (chapter 8) deals with the works El Greco was commissioned to paint after 1572. A series of hitherto overlooked references in the inventory of Lucrezia d'Este may tell an interesting story, as they indicate that Domenicos was seeking patronage not only in, but also outside Rome. At the same time he appears to have tried to build on his reputation as a portraitist, and I look at a number of important examples, which can safely be attributed to his Roman period. Finally, the last chapter (chapter 9) explores his contacts with Spanish scholars and artists after 1572, reflecting on their possible influence on his departure from Rome. With these connections I intend to re-position El Greco in the cosmopolitan environment of Rome, the artistic and scholarly splendour of which had a major impact on him. When he eventually abandoned the city, he was a truly accomplished painter, able to command respect for his art.

²⁷ A. Pérez de Tudela, 'Una carta inédita de El Greco al Cardenal Alessandro Farnesio', *Archivo español de arte*, lxxiii, 2000, pp. 267-268.

²⁸ G. Mancini, *Considerazioni sulla pittura*, Rome, c.1620, ed. A. Marucchi & L. Salerno, Rome, 1956, vol. I, pp. 229-230; De Borja de San Román y Fernández, *El Greco en Toledo*, p. 4, in *El Greco: Documents on His Life and Work*, p. 339.

***Chapter 1: Domenicos and His World:
Humanism and Reform in Late Renaissance Rome***

Eager to forge his own path to success, the twenty-nine-year-old Domenicos left Venice in 1570. Like many other artists, Theotocopoulos travelled south in search of new opportunities, ready to explore the artistic environment of Rome. Rome was unique as a place. Into the city poured people from all over Italy and Europe with skills to build and decorate palaces, paint frescoes and pictures of all kinds, and restore and advise on antiquities that enriched family collections. The old nobility, who liked to trace its ancestry back to ancient Rome, lived side by side with the new parvenu families, who also claimed their own – sometimes fictive - ancient Roman lineage. But above all, Rome was the seat of the pope, whose magnificent court attracted cardinals and high rank ecclesiastics. Each cardinal made his presence known in Rome, with the richer cardinals constructing and decorating a palace, which served as both a home and the seat of his court. At the same time, the papacy began to put the Tridentine decrees into effect, by undertaking certain tasks, including the Index of Forbidden Books and the revision of the breviary and missal. Sermons and lectures were launched to rekindle piety, in order to fight Protestantism and win back the heretics. As we have already touched on, these features led many art historians of the early twentieth century to approach El Greco as a Counter-Reformatist, who had a great capacity for moving the religious sentiments of viewers. Some saw him as a visionary, who gave visual form to visions, described by mystics, such as St. Theresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross, and transmitted spiritual wisdom to his viewers. The latter interpretation often involved the Byzantine roots of the painter¹. Yet such a reading ignores a number of pertinent issues, which suggest that El Greco should be viewed in a rather different light. These include the highly astute references to ancient art and architecture expressed in his annotations on the margins of Vasari's *Vite* and Vitruvius' *De architectura*; the refined ambience in which he lived in Rome and Toledo; his wish to find courtly protection, first from Cardinal Farnese and later from Philip II; his constant problems with the ecclesiastical institutions regarding the value of his paintings (and the related lawsuits); the artistic licence that he took in certain

¹ A.L. Mayer, *El Greco: Eine Einführung in das Leben und Wirken des Domenico Theotocopuli genannt El Greco*, Munich, (1st ed. 1911), 1916, pp. 51-52.

details of his pictures; and his insistence on the dignity of his painterly profession. By looking at these areas, I aim to add to our understanding of this significant artist.

It is well attested that Domenicos spent some years in Rome, where ecclesiastical patronage attracted many of the best artists from north and south of the Alps. It is a fundamental proposal of this study that Domenicos' stay in Rome, notably at the Palazzo Farnese, and his association with scholars such as Fulvio Orsini allowed him to enhance his artistic education and eventually shape his interests and ambitions. His work during this period shows his intellectual debt to the humanistic milieu of Rome, and articulates uniquely the interdependence between texts and images, verbal and visual rhetoric, art and learning. In this chapter I will seek to reconstruct Rome's scholarly environment against the backdrop of the Counter Reformation, so as to argue that the most privileged and wealthy ecclesiastics of the late sixteenth century, among them Alessandro Farnese, did not let their office interfere with their enjoyment of worldly pleasures; and that the humanists who lived in their households continued to pursue their antiquarian studies, carefully navigating between Christian piety and their passion for antiquity. Alongside the religious reform and spiritual self-awareness that Rome experienced in the second half of the sixteenth century, the city was and remained one of the great centres of humanistic study, a rich mine of art and knowledge that was fully appreciated by El Greco. Indeed, as I shall argue, the long-held view that late Renaissance Rome represented a period of religious austerity imposed by the Counter-Reformation Church, tells only half the story.

The very idea of the Counter Reformation has been in constant evolution since the early twentieth century, when historians, mostly Protestants, believed that it was shaped as a reaction to Protestantism, and that its principle weapons, the Roman Inquisition (1542) and the Index of Prohibited Books after 1540, were associated with suppression. It is not a coincidence that the pope who fits most neatly into this view of the Counter Reformation is the former inquisitor, Paul IV (1555-1559), an intransigent man whose policy was concentrated on repression of dissent. Already, Jacob Burckhardt (1818-1897) had claimed that the death of Leo X in 1521 signified a decline in the study of Greek letters², and later Anthony Blunt (1907-1983) added

² J. Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, Oxford, (1st Engl. transl. 1878), 1981, p. 118: "the decay of Hellenistic studies began about the time of the death of Leo X was partly due to a general change of intellectual attitude, and to a certain satiety of classical influences which now made

that humanism was ‘anathema to the Counter-Reformers’, and the Counter Reformation ‘was just as much a Counter-Renaissance as a Counter-Reformation’³. According to Blunt, the Counter Reformation was a movement that had a negative influence on art, particularly after 1530⁴, and the meaning of many works of art could only be elucidated by using the decrees of the Council of Trent and the treatises of theologians and critics⁵.

Yet modern historians have gradually revealed a reality more intriguing and complicated than this, shattering the stereotype that the Counter Reformation expressed the quintessence of Catholicism, as reaction and repression⁶. In doing so, they have presented the above movement as a multifarious one, subject to the volatile nature of the papal court and the various interests of the forces at play in the period, including the European powers that strongly influenced the Sacred College, the local nobility, religious orders, old and new, and lay confraternities. In more recent studies, moreover, the traditional name ‘Counter Reformation’ has been given up⁷ and the term ‘early modern Catholicism’ has been coined as a more comprehensive designation⁸. Given that terms are not simple labels, but they act as implicit categories

itself felt... the study of Greek literature died out about the year 1520 with the last of the colony of learned Greek exiles...”.

³ A. Blunt, *Artistic Theory in Italy: 1450-1600*, Oxford, (1st ed. 1940), 1991, p. 105.

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 106.

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 106.

⁶ There are still art historians who tend to view the Counter Reformation as a period of intense spiritual regeneration, when reformers imposed their values on art and the laity; see for example M. B. Hall, *The Sacred Image in the Age of Art*, New Haven & London, 2011, p. 227: “I am inclined to think that the sober Counter-Reformation spirit of Rome would have appealed to him [El Greco]”. Yet broad period generalizations are oversimplifications and cannot interpret sufficiently either El Greco’s artistic output, or the work of any other artist. Rather, there is a dialectic between the proclivities, visual qualities and the cultural background of an artist and the period’s aspirations, anxieties and conflicts.

⁷ It is interesting to note that the prefix ‘counter’ in the word Counter Reformation is related to the Latin ‘contra’, which refers to actions that are intended to prevent other actions, denoting that the movement is not autonomous. The prefix is repeated in almost all western European languages; for example, ‘controriforma’, ‘contrarreforma’, ‘Contre-réforme’, ‘Gegenreformation’ etc. Similarly, in Greek the preposition ‘anti/ἀντί’ has the meaning of ‘counter’; see H.G. Liddell & R. Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford, (1st ed. 1843), 1925, vol. I, pp. 246-247.

⁸ Historians call ‘early modern Catholicism’ the period during which the Catholic Church, using all its creative forces, attempted to give a satisfying answer to social and intellectual problems posed from 1450 to almost 1700; see H.O. Evennett, ‘The Counter-Reformation’, in *The Reformation Crisis*, ed. J. Hurstfield, London, 1965, pp. 58-71; J.W. O’Malley, ‘Was Ignatius Loyola a Church Reformer? How to Look at Early Modern Catholicism’, in *Religious Culture in the Sixteenth Century*, Hampshire, 1993, pp. 177-193; the article was initially published in *The Catholic Historical Review*, 77, 1991, pp. 177-193; R. Bireley, *The Refashioning of Catholicism, 1450-1700: A Reassessment of the Counter Reformation*, London, 1999, p. 8, who agrees with the use of the term ‘early modern Catholicism’ arguing that the terms ‘Counter Reformation’ and ‘Catholic Reform’ are still closely connected with Luther’s Reformation and refer directly to it. Unlike them, the term ‘early modern Catholicism’ gives the idea of the constant presence of the Church in the period that followed the Middle Ages; J. Bossy, *Christianity in the West: 1400-1700*, Oxford, 1985.

of interpretation, ‘early modern Catholicism’ denotes that the activities of the papal Church, especially those during the sixteenth century, were not a reaction to Luther’s challenge, but a significant part of earlier reform movements. In his Birkbeck lectures, delivered in Cambridge in 1951, Outram Evennett analysed the Counter Reformation as a phenomenon that preceded the Reformation⁹. Already the German Catholic historian Hubert Jedin (1900-1980) had introduced the term of ‘Catholic Reform’ in the discussion of the Counter Reformation, and the Italian Marxist Delio Cantimori (1904-1966) had disassociated the study of the Reformation from ecclesiastical history and placed it within the history of ideas¹⁰. Refraining from asking why the Reformation failed in Italy, Cantimori managed to assess soberly the achievements of both the German and Italian reformers of the sixteenth century, preparing the ground for a new, social approach to the problem of the Counter Reformation.

Going a step further, modern historical analysis of sixteenth-century Europe has come to see the Reformation and the Counter Reformation not only as a series of events causing religious divisions, but as complex processes which contributed to the transformation of political and social structures. From this perspective, many historians have minimised the significance of the year 1542, which saw the reorganisation of the Roman Inquisition by Paul III, and tend to view 1560 as a more meaningful date¹¹. Silvana Seidel Menchi, for instance, claims that documents coming from the Roman Inquisition archives between the years 1571 and 1588 showed a significant decrease in trials for heresy and an increase in cases for witchcraft¹². According to Seidel Menchi, what probably best described the last phase of the sixteenth century was a ‘theological syncretism’¹³, a fragmentation of the various reform groups, and the isolation of their leaders. Even when the Counter Reformation was at its highest point, Italy remained a fertile place for cultivating personal religious

⁹ H.O. Evennett, *The Spirit of the Counter-Reformation*, ed. J. Bossy, Cambridge, 1968.

¹⁰ H. Jedin, *Geschichte des Konzils von Trient*, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1949-1975, vols. I-IV, esp. vol. I; D. Cantimori, *Eretici italiani del cinquecento*, Florence, 1939; D. Cantimori, ‘Italy and the Papacy’, in *The New Cambridge Modern History*, Cambridge, 1958, vol. II, pp. 251-273; Cantimori, ‘Submission and Conformity: ‘Nicodemism’ and the Expectations of a Conciliar Solution to the Religious Question’, in *The Late Italian Renaissance: 1525-1630*, ed. E. Cochrane, London, 1970, pp. 244-265.

¹¹ A. Jacobson Schutte, ‘Periodization of Sixteenth-Century Italian Religious History: The Post-Cantimori Paradigm Shift’, *The Journal of Modern History*, 61, 1989, pp. 269-284, esp. p. 282. Conversely, P. McNair, *Peter Martyr in Italy. An Anatomy of an Apostasy*, Oxford, 1967, p. 10 still thinks that 1542 is of paramount importance.

¹² S. Seidel Menchi, ‘Italy’, in *The Reformation in National Context*, ed. B. Scribner, R. Porter & M. Teich, Cambridge, 1994, pp. 181-201, esp. p. 194; J. Tedeschi, ‘A New Perspective on the Roman Inquisition’, in *I tempi del Concilio: Religione, cultura e società nell’Europa tridentina*, ed. C. Mozzarelli & D. Zardin, Rome, 1997, pp. 253-269.

¹³ Seidel Menchi, ‘Italy’, p. 195.

ideas¹⁴. Such different perceptions speak volumes about the complexity of the Counter Reformation as a movement.

To be sure, the sixteenth-century Church needed reform, as the abuses of nepotism, simony, pluralism, and absenteeism were widespread in the ecclesiastical system. Ecclesiastics, humanists, theologians and noblemen worked intensively and fervently before 1540 for both their self-reform and the spiritual purification of the Church. Among the most significant reform groups of the period were certainly the ‘spirituali’, who turned to the study of the New Testament and St. Paul’s epistles, approaching with an open mind the much-discussed doctrine of justification by faith alone (‘*justificatio ex sola fide*’), and the uselessness of good works¹⁵. Their compromising approach to this thorny theological issue, which led the Western Church to an ideological split, eventually distanced them from the mother Church and placed them on the borderline between Protestantism and Catholicism, between ‘heresy’ and ‘orthodoxy’. Their aspiration to reconcile the two opposing doctrines by arguing that justification was possible through faith without omission of good works, came to nothing¹⁶.

In addition to the ‘spirituali’, monks, friars and members of the clergy sought their salvation by cultivating a more personal ‘spirituality’. Although many of them pursued their religious fulfilment by reconciling their core beliefs with those of the Catholic Church, others aspired to a more radical renewal of the Church, based on the

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 195; for the opposite view see P.M.J. McNair, ‘The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century in Renaissance Italy’, in *Religion and Humanism, Studies in Church History*, ed. K. Robbins, 17, Oxford, 1981, pp. 149-166, esp. p. 151, who argued that “There was no reformation in Italy in the sense in which there was one in Germany, France, England and Scotland”.

¹⁵ E. Jung, ‘On the Nature of Evangelism in Sixteenth-Century Italy’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, xiv, 1953, pp. 511-527, whose stimulating article has been severely criticized by E.G. Gleason and P. McNair mainly because the Catholic Jung stressed the undogmatic, aristocratic and transitory character of the movement; Jung, ‘On the Nature of Evangelism in Sixteenth-Century Italy’, p. 520; McNair, *Peter Martyr in Italy. An Anatomy of an Apostasy*, pp. 1-50; E.G. Gleason, ‘On the nature of Sixteenth-Century Italian Evangelism: Scholarship, 1953-1978’, *Sixteenth Century Journal*, ix, 1978, pp. 3-25, who with care and exactitude corrected Jung’s theory by stressing the insistence of the ‘spirituali’ on the study of St. Paul’s epistles and the Bible as well as their strong belief in the internal reformation of the Church, (*ibid*, pp. 16-19). As a *terminus a quo* of the movement Gleason accepts 1512 and as a *terminus ad quem* circa 1560, though she states that the influence of evangelism can be detected even in the seventeenth century, (*ibid*, pp. 22, 24-25); also O.M.T. Logan, ‘Grace and Justification: Some Italian views of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, xx, 1, 1969, pp. 67-78; D. Fenlon, *Heresy and Obedience in Tridentine Italy: Cardinal Pole and the Counter Reformation*, Cambridge, 1972.

¹⁶ Jung, ‘On the Nature of Evangelism in Sixteenth-Century Italy’, p. 521. Gasparo Contarini’s proposal at the Diet of Ratisbon in 1541 of man’s double justification (‘*duplex iustitia*’) was not well received by either the Catholics, or the Protestants, (*ibid*, pp. 517-518). Consequently, his failure marked the demise of the ‘spirituali’ as a religious group. For the role of Gasparo Contarini as a reformer, E. G. Gleason, *Gasparo Contarini, Venice, Rome, and Reform*, Berkeley, 1993.

ideals of Italian evangelism, Renaissance humanists, and the teachings of the early Church Fathers. Soon both minor and serious deviations from dogma became apparent among important members of the orders¹⁷. In many cases the situation was critical and immediate action was required, principally because of the close contact of such men with the laity during their devotional activities, including the celebration of the Mass, preaching and almsgiving. Thus it was necessary to convene a council, the Council of Trent, to reconfirm the doctrines of the Church, the authority of which had been seriously questioned by Luther, and to coordinate earlier efforts of self-reform.

However, neither the convocation of the Council of Trent in 1545, which dragged on for eighteen long years, nor the zeal of the religious orders¹⁸ and their confraternities¹⁹, managed to remedy persistent deficiencies in the papal institution. For one thing, nepotism was still rife, and the cardinals continued to flaunt their wealth through extensive households and magnificent houses and villas²⁰. Concessions of ecclesiastical posts and pensions, and accumulation of benefices and privileges continued²¹. The examples of Julius III (1550-1555), who elevated the immoral Innocenzo Del Monte to the purple, together with five more Del Monte

¹⁷ Among those who aroused the suspicion of the ecclesiastical authorities were the Capuchin prior Bernardino Ochino (1487-1564), the most popular preacher of the mid-century, who took flight from Italy in 1542, the Lateran canon Pietro Martire Vermigli (1499-1562), who also left Italy in 1542, the Franciscan Camillo Renato (c.1500-1575), who found refuge in Switzerland in 1542, and the Bishop of Capodistria Pier Paolo Vergerio (1498-1565), who fled to Switzerland in 1549. For Vergerio, A. Jacobson Schutte, *Pier Paolo Vergerio: The Making of An Italian Reformer*, Geneva, 1977. Finally, the Benedictine monk Giorgio Siculo was executed in May of 1551, causing great distress to his order whose reputation was already wounded; B. Collett, *Italian Benedictine Scholars and the Reformation: The Congregation of Santa Giustina of Padua*, Oxford, 1985, pp. 213-245.

¹⁸ For the contribution of the religious orders to the Counter Reformation see P.O. Kristeller, 'The Contribution of Religious Orders to Renaissance Thought and Learning', in *Medieval Aspects of Renaissance Learning: Three Essays by Paul Oskar Kristeller*, ed. E.P. Mahoney, Durham, N. Carolina, 1974, pp. 95-114; O'Malley, 'Was Ignatius Loyola a Church Reformer?', pp. 177-193; Bireley, *The Refashioning of Catholicism*, pp. 5-6. Both O'Malley and Bireley are Catholics and belong to the Jesuits.

¹⁹ C.F. Black, *Italian Confraternities in the Sixteenth Century*, Cambridge, 1989.

²⁰ J.W. O'Malley, *Trent: What Happened at The Council*, Cambridge Mass., 2013, p. 37, where it is stated that even after Trent, Cardinal Carlo Borromeo, "the most famous exemplar of a 'reformed' cardinal-bishop, had a household of 150", whereas the inventory of Cardinal Ippolito D'Este included "79 pairs of gloves and over 50 red birettas"; A.V. Antonovics, 'Counter-Reformation Cardinals: 1534-90', *European Studies Review*, ii, 1972, pp. 301-328, where the author remarks that Borromeo's revenue was estimated at 52,000 *scudi* during the period under discussion, and that this period "saw a tension between certain new ideals and aspirations concerning the ecclesiastical life and traditional notions of rank and hierarchy", (*ibid*, p. 323); A. Prosperi, 'La figura del vescovo fra Quattro e Cinquecento: persistenze, disagi e novità', in *Storia d'Italia: La Chiesa e il potere politico dal Medioevo all'età contemporanea*, ed. G. Chittolini & G. Miccoli, Turin, 1986, pp. 219-262.

²¹ Antonovics, 'Counter-Reformation Cardinals: 1534-90', p. 309: "...it is difficult to see any far-reaching changes in this respect [nepotism] before 1590. It is possible that the scale of promotions of close relatives declined to some degree (for example [...] under Sixtus V or Alexander VI) but is equally arguable that the honours bestowed on those who were promoted were greater".

kinsmen among the twenty cardinals he created, and Paul IV, who promoted his violent nephew Carlo Carafa to the cardinalate²², provide important evidence for how the popes continued to operate after 1545. Even the saintly Pius V did not entirely avoid nepotism, as he promoted his relative Michele Bonelli, his secretary Girolamo Rusticucci, and his personal confessor Arcangelo Bianchi to the cardinalate²³, and was unable to disregard political pressures and requests for promotion and financial concessions²⁴. His relationship with the secular princes was often a source of aggravation²⁵, and even though he and Philip II were co-leaders of the Counter Reformation and natural allies, they generally tended to follow their own political plans²⁶. Similarly, cardinals often sought favours in return for their support to the Spanish or French factions²⁷. Members of the apostolic household, religious orders, bishops and clergy, all agents and defenders of the Counter-Reformation Church, moreover had strong political allegiances and promoted their own personal interests. Their main objective was the same as before: to keep their benefices and safeguard their privileges²⁸, a hidden agenda which was to blame for much of their antagonism. The above evidence illustrates that despite the religious fervour and the activities of the papal Church to enforce orthodoxy, unity was not always guaranteed in this game of changing alliances.

Perhaps not coincidentally, recent historiography has referred to the period both as ‘post Tridentine’ and ‘late Renaissance’, and the analysis of the Counter Reformation is often done within the wider context of the Renaissance, which in its

²² M.J. Levin, *Agents of Empire: Spanish Ambassadors in Sixteenth-Century Italy*, Ithaca & London, 2005, pp. 169-170; M. Firpo, ‘The Cardinal’, in *Renaissance Characters*, ed. E. Garin, Engl. transl. L.G. Cochrane, Chicago, 1991, p. 70, which outlines the case of Cardinal Alfonso Carafa, who “was accused of having forged the papal bull and avoided judgment by renouncing all his offices and paying a fine of 100,000 scudi”.

²³ Antonovics, ‘Counter-Reformation Cardinals: 1534-90’, pp. 310-311.

²⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 315-316, note 84; Philip II agreed to contribute to the Holy League given that Pius V granted him financial subsidies; Levin, *Agents of Empire*, p. 95.

²⁵ Levin, *Agents of Empire*, pp. 88-93.

²⁶ J. Lynch, ‘Philip II and the Papacy’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5 series, II, 1961, p. 24: “The Spanish clergy looked to the crown rather than to Rome, and Philip II, in spite of his devotion to the church and his concern for reform, could not resist the temptation to exploit this power for political or economics ends”; the Carranza case is another example of the different views Philip II and the pope had on important issues. As the archbishop’s trial in Rome dragged on, Philip II had the large revenues of the Archdiocese of Toledo at his disposal; T.J. Dandlet, *Spanish Rome: 1500-1700*, New Haven & London, 2001, p. 68.

²⁷ Levin, *Agents of Empire*, pp. 71-72.

²⁸ O’Malley, *Trent: What Happened at The Council*, p. 17: “The benefice system was at the heart of the way the church operated, so that any reform that touched upon benefices touched upon somebody’s pocketbook”.

turn is approached either as a historical ‘event’, or as a ‘movement’²⁹. While some historians have claimed that the end of the Renaissance can be identified with the beginning of the Counter Reformation, others have argued that the Renaissance lasted longer, right up until the beginning of the seventeenth century³⁰.

To be sure, the Counter Reformation was not a one-way process, overtly opposed to Renaissance and Humanism. The classical component of the Renaissance, namely the study of antiquity, continued to survive, and the search for Greek and Latin manuscripts carried on unabated throughout the sixteenth century. In April 1548 Pope Paul III ordered his agent, Antonino Sirleto, to search the monasteries of Otranto for rare Greek and Latin manuscripts and bring them to Rome, on the pretext that they would be better preserved in the Vatican library. The project was repeated five years later by his successor, Julius III, who in 1553 sent Annibale Spadafora to search the Greek monasteries of Calabria and Sicily for manuscripts³¹. But it was not only the popes involved in this bibliophile quest. Philip II, who wanted to create a great library as part of the Escorial, instructed his ambassadors to scour Italy for books. Spanish agents in Rome were always on the lookout for facilitating their king’s interests as a collector. In 1587, Philip II wrote to his ambassador in Rome that he should acquire

²⁹ Burckhardt approached the Renaissance as a glorious ‘period’ damaged by the Counter Reformation; Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, p. 120; Kristeller approached the Counter Reformation as a ‘fundamentally Christian age’ arguing that the religious beliefs either retained or changed form, but their authority was never totally doubted; P.O. Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought: The Classic, Scholastic, and Humanistic Strains*, New York, 1961, p. 73, and he believed that the Reformation was just part of the Renaissance, (*ibid*, p. 70); W.J. Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defence of Republican Liberty: Renaissance Values in the Age of the Counter Reformation*, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1968; E.H. Gombrich, ‘The Renaissance: Period or Movement?’, in *Background to the English Renaissance*, ed. J.B. Trapp, London, 1974, pp. 9-30; P. Burke, *The European Renaissance: Centres and Peripheries*, Oxford, 1998, pp. 170-172.

³⁰ Peter Partner belongs to those historians who defended the first view, that of an uninterrupted succession of events or movements which led from the Renaissance to the Counter Reformation. In his book *Renaissance Rome: 1500-1559, a Portrait of a Society*, Partner argued that the end of the Renaissance in Rome should be considered the year 1559 – a date that was also included in the title of the book- when the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis was signed on April 3 1559; P. Partner, *Renaissance Rome, 1500-1559: A Portrait of a Society*, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London, 1976, pp. 42-44. A different group of historical thinking promoted the idea of a broader chronological span, namely that the Renaissance lasted longer in the historical evolution from one age to the next. Wallace K. Ferguson, for example, saw the Renaissance as ‘the age of transition’ and stressed the necessity of studying it in a broader historical framework; Ferguson, ‘The Interpretation of the Renaissance: Suggestions for a Synthesis’, in *Renaissance Essays*, ed. P.O. Kristeller & P.P. Wiener, New York, 1968, p. 64: “Viewing the Renaissance as an age in the history of Western Europe, then, I would define it as the age of transition from medieval to modern civilization”; Burke, *The European Renaissance*, pp. 101-103; P. Burke, *The Renaissance*, London, (1st ed. 1987), 1997, pp. 5-6.

³¹ P. Paschini, ‘Guglielmo Sirleto prima del cardinalato’, in *Tre ricerche sulla storia della chiesa nel Cinquecento*, Rome, 1945, pp. 155-281, esp. pp. 218-219.

the library of a recently deceased cardinal, who was renowned for his collection of Greek manuscripts³².

Of course, in scholarly matters, humanists had a large part to say. They read classical texts, collected Greek and Latin manuscripts, identified recently found antiquities, discussed numismatics and epigraphy, and helped wealthy patrons to turn their palaces and villas into artfully designed collections of ancient and modern objects. In a letter of 1568 addressed to the Duke of Ferrara, for instance, Cardinal Alessandro Farnese confirmed that there were still a large number of ‘letterati’ in Rome, engrossed in the study of antiquity³³. The study of antiquity released men of letters from the mundane realities of everyday life and was a worthy occupation for the scions of rich Roman families and elite members of the Curia. A humanist education, which included the study of grammar, rhetoric, history, poetry and moral philosophy, was considered a widely accepted qualification for entry into the privileged classes of Italy³⁴. High-ranking clergy, who served in the Curia, or in the papal household, or were members of cardinals’ courts, had often studied under important humanists and shared the same antiquarian interests. For some of the distinguished scholars of the sixteenth century, such as Annibale Caro, Ottavio Pantagato, and Onofrio Panvinio, a rare coin, an inscription, or a fragment of a statue

³² Levin, *Agents of Empire*, p. 193; the deceased cardinal may have been Guglielmo Sirleto.

³³ G. Bertoni, ‘Ippolito II D’ Este, cardinale di Ferrara’, *Rivista storica italiana*, ii, 1924, p. 352, n. 1: “...la partita di quest’ huomo da bene è per recare ad un tempo medesimo et dispiacere et incommodo a tutti coloro che si diletmano delle antichità di Roma, de quali è buon numero in questa città, come V.E. può sapere, et io tra gli altri ne riceverò la mia parte...” (the departure of this good man [Ligorio] is to cause at the same time displeasure and annoyance to all those who are occupied with antiquities of Rome, who are many in this city as Your Excellency knows).

³⁴ The word ‘humanist’ (‘umanista /humanista’) initially denoted someone who was involved in the study or the teaching of the ‘humanities’, or the ‘studia humanitatis’; grammar was necessary for the correct written and oral communication; rhetoric for articulating arguments during discussions concerning political decisions; history and poetry were related to the knowledge of the ancient world; moral philosophy could allow someone to make sound decisions when moral dilemmas were raised. In any event, humanistic knowledge was supposed to satisfy the practical needs of everyday life; P.F. Grendler, ‘Five Italian Occurrences of Umanista, 1540-1574’, *Renaissance Quarterly*, 20, 1967, pp. 317-325; A. Campana, ‘The Origin of the Word ‘Humanist’’, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, ix, 1946, pp. 60-73, esp. p. 66, where Campana argued that the word ‘humanist’ signified the ‘public or private teacher of classical literature of the chair of humanitas or umanità’; Kristeller, on the other hand, pointed out that the word ‘humanist’ probably originated from the ‘slang of university students’ towards the end of the fifteenth century; Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought: The Classic, Scholastic, and Humanistic Strains*, pp. 3, 24; Partner, *Renaissance Rome, 1500-1559*, pp. 14-15; Grendler argued that Campana’s and Kristeller’s definition of humanist as a professional teacher and a man of letters is accurate particularly after 1540; he also added that “one hesitates to apply humanist in its Cinquecento meaning to such a figure as Leonardo Bruni who was both a classical scholar and political activist, but never held a university position”; P. F. Grendler, ‘The Concept of Humanist in Cinquecento Italy’, in *Renaissance Studies in Honor of Hans Baron*, ed. A. Molho & J. A. Tedeschi, 1973, pp. 447-463, esp. pp. 447-448, 461.

unearthed in the gardens of a mansion on the outskirts of Rome, seems to have been far more challenging and appealing than the disagreements between Catholics and Protestants on dogmatic issues. For instance, Paolo Giovio (1486-1552), the Bishop of Nocera, who was attached to the court of Cardinal Farnese, was fairly reluctant to engage in polemics on theological questions, such as the doctrine of free will³⁵, but he was always eager to occupy himself with the portrait museum in his villa near Como, emulating the classical precedents that he so admired. Displaying a similar mind-set, Carlo Sigonio³⁶ (c.1520-1584), known for his mastery of Cicero's works, imitated the ancient writer's style and forged the *Consolatio* (1583), a work which Cicero wrote on his daughter's death and was preserved only in fragments. Earlier, Sigonio had published a *History of Bologna* (1571), which provoked the disapproval of the Church³⁷. Both his brush with papal censorship and the episode of the Ciceronian *Consolation* may indicate that he was not trying to overstep the mark or antagonize his fellow scholars, but only to elicit interest in the authority of ancient sources by 'digging up' local archives and 'unearthing' until then unknown material.

Popes, noblemen, cardinals and clerics of substantial wealth scoured Italy for manuscripts, and paid high prices to Greek agents who brought them from Greece, competing with each other to acquire a rare codex for their personal library³⁸. Many of those who held important positions in the Church hierarchy and lived in Rome, such as the Bishops Girolamo Garimberto (1506-1575)³⁹ and Angelo Colocci (1467/74-1549), were always happy to display their collections of books and antiquities. The canon Fulvio Orsini (1529-1600) was also very proud of his 162 Greek codices, some of which came from the hand of important Greek scholars: 'I am particularly fond of books and I can say I have managed what many collectors did after a long time... I have very important books... by Greek authors, old and new, written by the hand of the authors themselves, such as Bessarion, Gaza and the two

³⁵ T.C. Price Zimmerman, *Paolo Giovio: The Historian and the Crisis of Sixteenth-Century Italy*, Princeton, 1995, p. 273.

³⁶ W. McCuaig, *Carlo Sigonio: The Changing World of the Late Renaissance*, Princeton, 1989, p. 17: "Temperamental independence, a preference for solitary labor, and a lack of interest in religious questions kept Sigonio from dangerous involvements".

³⁷ McCuaig, *Carlo Sigonio*, p. 285: "He never thought of himself as a historian writing in opposition to the papacy, nor was he"; also *ibid*, pp. 251-257.

³⁸ For the collection of manuscripts see, for example, Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, pp. 114-118.

³⁹ C.M. Brown & A.M. Lorenzoni, *Our Accustomed Discourse on the Antique: Cesare Gonzaga and Gerolamo Garimberto, Two Renaissance Collectors of Greco-Roman Art*, New York & London, 1993, pp. 39-61.

Lascaris...⁴⁰. Cardinal Guglielmo Sirleto (1514-1585) had a similar penchant for books. He built up in Rome a notable library, which came to contain around 2000 manuscripts, by adding items not only from his own search for books and manuscripts in the monasteries of Calabria when he became bishop of Squillace in 1568, but also from Marcello Cervini's collection, when his mentor passed away in 1555⁴¹. It was not unusual after all that the death of a collector meant the immediate dispersal of his collection and the rapid establishment of a new one. Rarely were the wishes of the deceased for his collection to remain intact after his death fulfilled. His relatives and heirs usually released themselves from the burden of the collected items the day after his death. Books, manuscripts and fragments of antique sculpture, collected with great difficulty over a lifetime, changed hands almost immediately⁴².

The preoccupation of well-known men of letters with antiquity became all-consuming. Many of these men, including the Dominican Alfonso Chacón (1530-1599) and the Augustinian monk Onofrio Panvinio (1529-1568), were ordained. Others made full use of their visits to Venice and Rome to search for books, and they were willing to invest much energy and a great deal of money to secure rare manuscripts for their libraries or to hire Greek scribes to copy them, as Don Diego Hurtado de Mendoza (1504-1575) did in 1540s⁴³. This was also the case of Benito Arias Montano (1527-1598), biblical commentator and royal librarian of the Escorial who, when visiting Rome to procure provisional acceptance for his Polyglot Bible in May 1572, hired a Jewish scholar to copy Hebrew manuscripts⁴⁴. Montano's case is remarkable, not only because it shows the broad readings of a bibliophile, but also

⁴⁰ P. De Nolhac, *La Bibliothèque de Fulvio Orsini*, Paris, 1887, pp. 165-166, [letter dated July 4, 1587]: "Spertialmente ho havuto amori alli libri, delli quali posso dire haver conseguito quello da molti curiosi et in molto tempo era stato ragunato...Non tanto nelle cose latine quanto nelle greche avendo io segnalatissimi libri scritti anticamente et modernamente di mano di essi autori, come di Bessarione, di Gaza, dell' uno et l'altro Lascari..."; the term 'curiosi' seems to refer not only to collectors of manuscripts, but also to all those who sought and collected various objects of art. Fulvio also possessed 300 Latin manuscripts.

⁴¹ After the death of Cervini, Sirleto's library was enriched significantly, when a fair amount of manuscripts (12 boxes) and prints entered his collection; F. Russo, 'La Biblioteca del Card. Sirleto', in *Il Cardinale Guglielmo Sirleto (1514-1585), Atti del convegno di studio nel IV centenario della morte*, ed. L. Calabretta & G. Sinatora, Catanzaro, 1989, p. 224.

⁴² See for example, V. Fanelli, 'Le raccolte archeologiche del Colocci', in *Studi di Bibliografia e di storia in onore di Tammaro de Marinis*, Verona, 1964, vol. II, pp. 281-288; J. Woolfson & A. Gregory, 'Aspects of Collecting in Renaissance Padua: A Bust of Socrates for Niccolò Leonico Tomeo', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 58, 1995, pp. 252-265; G. Rebecchini, 'Further Evidence about the Books of Baldassare Castiglione', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, lxxiii, 2000, pp. 271-276.

⁴³ Levin, *Agents of Empire*, p. 190.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 193.

because it reflects the failure of the Counter-Reformation Church to stifle humanistic studies in one of the great centres of Renaissance culture. Montano belonged to Rome's large international cast of scholars, who together with the local 'letterati' studied and investigated ancient texts, whether they were recorded on vellum or stone, signalling a new concept of culture founded on comparison and critical assessment. Among the men with whom Montano was closely associated in Rome were Fulvio Orsini and, as will be argued later, Domenicos Theotocopoulos.

The scholars' passion for learning, however, did not mean that they were less pious Christians or less devoted to the institution of the papacy than other Romans⁴⁵. They often faced difficulties, as they struggled to combine their professional duties in the ecclesiastical hierarchy with their own literary pursuits⁴⁶. The often-quoted case of Antonio Agustín, the Spanish jurist, epigraphist and celebrated Latinist, is telling in this sense. In 1566, when he was already a Bishop, he wrote to Fulvio Orsini from Lérida: 'I doubt the value of excavating all these naked statues, because there is no new information to be got from them. All those aggressively masculine herms of gods in the Cesi and Carpi gardens, that hermaphrodite with the satyr in the chapel, and Pope Julius's vineyard with all its Venuses and other salacities, may have a certain scientific value for scholars and artists, but their filthiness shocks transalpine visitors to Rome...'⁴⁷. Yet the image of Agustín as a pious ecclesiastic, offended by the nudity of ancient statues, contrasts with his earlier reverence of antiquity demonstrated by his thorough studies of ancient coins and in the large number of Greek manuscripts listed in his library. Moreover, when he settled in Lérida in 1564, he complained to Orsini bitterly that he was among barbarians⁴⁸ away from Rome, 'la patria commune' of all humanists⁴⁹. Thus, his comments, which clearly show mingled disapproval and distaste towards ancient sculpture, mask a level of dissimulation and

⁴⁵ For a different view see Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, p. 162-170, esp. p. 162: "To the two chief accusations against them [humanists]...a third charge of irreligion was now loudly added by the rising powers of the Counter-Reformation"; p. 166: "Of these charges, that of heresy soon became the most dangerous...".

⁴⁶ W.K. Ferguson, *The Renaissance in Historical Thought: Five Centuries of Interpretation*, Cambridge MA, 1948, p. 54; A. Blunt, 'The Triclinium in Religious Art', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, ii, 1939, p. 272, where Blunt argued that archaeological curiosity was not in opposition "with the spirit of the Counter-Reformation and the ideas of the Council of Trent".

⁴⁷ De Nohac, *La Bibliothèque de Fulvio Orsini*, p. 62: "i Oltramontani si scandalizzano bestialmente"; I follow the translation of E. Mandowsky & C. Mitchell, *Pirro Ligorio's Roman Antiquities: The Drawings in MS XIII> B. 7 in the National Library in Naples*, London, 1983, p. 31.

⁴⁸ De Nohac, *La Bibliothèque*, p. 61; Cardinal Granvelle also shared the same feelings with Agustín, namely that he lived among barbarians, (*ibid*, p. 61).

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p. 20.

hypocrisy⁵⁰. A possible reason for this was the intellectual climate of his country, which was very different from cosmopolitan Rome, where the study of antiquity was not incompatible with the prestige and authority of a high-ranking member of the Church. The notorious *autos da fe*, and the increasing influence of the Spanish Holy Inquisition on the populace, created a stifling atmosphere in Spain that made the pursuit of antiquarian studies and their integration into current cultural practices, especially by those who belonged to the clergy, very difficult. Agustín's negative comments on ancient statues, therefore, may be understood better if we place them within the conservative intellectual climate of Spain.

In Rome, however, the collecting of antique sculpture, reliefs, inscriptions, cameos, coins, medals and incised gems was more prevalent than ever, as was the acquisition of pictures, prints and drawings. The size of a collection was largely determined by the owner's financial means, as well as by competition and rivalry. Members of the secular and ecclesiastic elite displayed their wealth and status by amassing art and adorning their palaces and gardens with ancient sculpture⁵¹. As time went by, art collecting became more daring and sophisticated. Alongside the distinguished collections of the D'Este, Carpi, Cesi, della Valle and Farnese, humanists, such as Fulvio Orsini, Lelio Pasqualini⁵² (1549-1611), and lesser-known figures, such as the jurist Antonio Tronsarelli⁵³, formed smaller, but equally interesting, collections. Tronsarelli's inventory, for example, includes a large number of antique marble statues, statuettes and busts together with an important collection of

⁵⁰ A good example of professional and personal dilemmas, which the humanists often faced, may be seen from the notorious case of Bartolomé Carranza. Although Agustín had met Carranza personally in Cardinal Pole's entourage, his attitude towards Carranza was directed entirely by his loyalty to Philip II. As a member of the committee of the Index of the Prohibited Books, and torn between his master and his spiritual father, Agustín acknowledged mistakes in Carranza's *Comentario sobre el catechismo Cristiano*; R. Truman, 'Jean Matal and His Relations with Antonio Agustín, Jerónimo Osório da Fonseca and Pedro Ximenes' in *Antonio Agustín: Between Renaissance and Counter Reform*, ed. M.H Crawford, London, 1993, pp. 251-252, 260, 261: "He [Agustín] associated himself with the complaint of the Conde de Luna (Philip II's ambassador at Trent) that approval of the Catechism was an insult to the king of Spain and the Spanish Inquisition", (*ibid*, p. 261).

⁵¹ K. Wren Christian, 'Raphael's 'Philemon' and the Collecting of Antiquities in Rome', *The Burlington Magazine*, 146, 2004, p. 760; C.M. Brown & A.M. Lorenzoni, 'Major and Minor Collections of Antiquities in Documents of the Later Sixteenth Century', *The Art Bulletin*, lxxvi, 1984, pp. 496-507.

⁵² A. Herz, 'Lelio Pasqualini: A Late Sixteenth-Century Antiquarian', in *Rome Italy Renaissance: Essays in Art History Honoring Irving Lavin on His Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. M. Aronberg Lavin, New York, 1990, pp. 191-206, esp. pp. 195-198; D. Jaffé, 'Aspects of Gem Collecting in the Early Seventeenth Century, Nicolas-Claude Peiresc and Lelio Pasqualini', *The Burlington Magazine*, 135, 1993, pp. 103-120.

⁵³ M. Lanfranconi, 'Antonio Tronsarelli: A Roman Collector of the Late Sixteenth Century', *The Burlington Magazine*, 140, 1998, pp. 537-550.

drawings by sixteenth-century artists, such as Arrigo Fiamingo, Taddeo and Federico Zuccari, Giulio Clovio, Raffaellino da Reggio, Pirro Ligorio, Francesco Salviati, Titian and Giacomo Vignola⁵⁴. Like the eighty volumes of his library listed in his inventory, these works on paper, framed and hung on the walls of his house⁵⁵, imply a close relationship between the owner and his images, as well as a certain aesthetic enjoyment, shared within a more or less restricted circle of scholars.

Living and working alongside Roman humanists, artists attempted to align themselves with antiquarian studies, by becoming accustomed to the motifs tied to them and exploring the close connection between verbal and visual culture. In this way, they managed to assert their own status. Reading ancient texts, collecting antiquities, and writing treatises gradually became an important part of the identity of a new type of artist, the ‘pictor doctus’. Raphael began to study the topography of ancient Rome and collect antiquities as a means of underlining his role as a learned man in his own right⁵⁶. Following in Raphael’s footsteps, the Fleming Lambert Lombart (1505-1566), who came to Rome in 1537-38 in the retinue of Cardinal Reginald Pole, sought to compare the knowledge from literary sources with the visual observation of the city’s surviving antiquities. By studying and collecting ancient coins, intaglios and other artefacts, Lombart managed to become an expert in the interpretation of images⁵⁷. This type of study was the favoured antiquarian approach in the second half of the sixteenth century, and it used numismatics, epigraphy, portrait iconography and topographical research to find out what the ancient world looked like. In this sense, Rome can be considered as the great artistic arena for all those who were in pursuit of a ‘paragone’, a competition, on the one hand, between ancient and modern, and on the other, between words and images. Andrea Palladio’s visits to Rome, first in 1541 in company of Giangiorgio Trissino (1478-1550) and later in 1554 of Daniele Barbaro (1514-1570)⁵⁸, prompted him to write a work on the antiquities of the city, entitled *L’ antichità di Roma* (1554)⁵⁹. The book was not only

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p. 542.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 539, 545-549.

⁵⁶ Wren Christian, ‘Raphael’s ‘Philemon’ and the collecting of antiquities in Rome’, pp. 760-763.

⁵⁷ E. Lingo, *François Duquesnoy and the Greek Ideal*, New Haven & London, 2007, pp. 168-169; describing the process of studying visual sources, Lingo introduced the term ‘visual philology’ (*ibid*, pp. 4, 11), which was criticised by Frits Scholten as ‘ahistorical’, F. Scholten, (review), *The Burlington Magazine*, 149, 2007, pp. 863.

⁵⁸ D. R. Coffin, *Pirro Ligorio: The Renaissance Artist, Architect, and Antiquarian*, Pennsylvania, 2004, p. 18.

⁵⁹ *Palladio’s Rome*, Engl. transl. V. Hart & P. Hicks, New Haven & London, 2006, pp. 29, 206.

emulating Raphael, who first began to reconstruct the plan of the ancient city with surveys and excavations, but it was also clearly intended to imitate the earlier works of humanists, such as Andrea Fulvio (c.1470-1527) and Bartolomeo Marliani (1488-1566)⁶⁰. The respect that Palladio later enjoyed not only as an architect, but also as a ‘uomo letterato’, must be attributed to a large extent to his receptivity to archaeological knowledge during his visits to Rome. His collaboration with Barbaro on the publication of Vitruvius’ treatise (1556), where Palladio not only designed the woodcuts in books I-IV, but he also contributed his own expertise⁶¹, is evidence of the new status of the artist as a learned man. It was not, however, always easy for artists to present themselves in this light. The guilds to which they belonged, and under whose rules they had undergone their apprenticeship, were never designed to deal with philological and antiquarian issues. As a result, scholars viewed artists as artisans and not as learned men, often having a patronising and dismissive attitude towards them.

Yet, artists insisted on showing their new professional identity not only through learning and collecting, but also through the embellishment of their houses. Mantegna’s house in ‘all’antica’ style, for example, or Vasari’s houses in Arezzo (from 1542 onwards) and Florence (c.1569-1573), with their systematic portrayal of ancient artists inspired by Pliny the Elder⁶², were intended to stress the sophistication of their owners. Similarly, Federico Zuccaro frescoed the vaults of the ground floor of his house in Florence (1577), and decorated its grand public entrance with his

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, pp. xli-xlvi; M. Daly Davis, ‘Andrea Palladio’s *L’Antichità di Roma* of 1554’, *Pegasus, Berliner Beiträge zum Nachleben der Antike*, 9, 2007, pp. 151-192, where the author argued that Palladio’s *Antichità di Roma* was a compilation based, among others, on Flavio Biondo’s *Roma restaurata*, translated into Italian by Lucio Fauno. The latter can be identified with Giovanni Tarcagnota, a cognoscente of antiquities in the service of the Venetian editor Michele Tramezzino. Later Daly Davis suggests that the author of *L’Antichità di Roma* is not Palladio but Tarcagnota, a hypothesis that can be supported by a passing reference made by Pirro Ligorio. The fact that *L’Antichità di Roma* is not an original work, as Daly Davis has rightly proved, does not explain sufficiently why Palladio would have allowed a book on antiquities and on the churches of Rome to be published under his name. Daly Davis’ argument that “both works served to enhance the architect’s growing reputation”, (*ibid*, p. 184), is not entirely satisfactory. Conversely, I would suggest that Palladio’s recent entrée into antiquarian circles and his preoccupation with Vitruvius and Roman topography under the tutelage of important humanists, such as Trissino and Barbaro, appear to justify the derivative and uninventive *Antichità di Roma*. His limited antiquarian knowledge held him back from questioning ancient sources, or contradicting scholars of the calibre of Flavio Biondo and Bartolomeo Marliani. It is, however, highly likely that a knowledgeable antiquarian, such as Tarcagnota, may have helped Palladio with the structure of the book as well as with organising his material based on ancient and modern literary sources, reflecting “the most up-to-date archaeological and antiquarian scholarship” (*ibid*, p 174).

⁶¹ L. Cellauro, ‘Daniele Barbaro and Vitruvius: The Architectural Theory of a Renaissance Humanist and Patron’, *Papers of the British School at Rome*, 72, 2004, pp. 293-329, esp. p. 298.

⁶² P.L. Rubin, *Giorgio Vasari: Art and History*, New Haven & London, 1995, pp. 35-37.

personal *impresa*, a motif that was later repeated in his palace in Rome (begun in 1593)⁶³. A similar aspiration was expressed in the house of Giambologna (1529-1608) in Florence⁶⁴, or in the elegant house of Alessandro Vittoria (1525-1608) in Venice, which was adorned with frescos, paintings and sculptures and with an extensive garden as a place for meeting and discussion⁶⁵. The ownership of big, elegant houses was proof not only of the refinement of artists but also of their new status, and it cannot be mere coincidence that Domenicos rented in Toledo three spacious apartments, the so-called royal quarters, in the ancient palace of the Marqués de Villena (now destroyed), from 1585 until at least 1590, and again in 1604⁶⁶. More importantly, while the other tenants of the complex paid between five and thirty ducats a year in rent, the Cretan paid 50 ducats in the 1580s, 230 in the 1590s, and 175 in the first decade of the seventeenth century⁶⁷. Apparently, he perceived his house as a symbol of the rise of his profession to the status of a ‘uomo letterato’, a view that was relatively new in Spain, but was well established in Italy.

Moreover, as we have already touched on, artists in Italy sought to display their learning by measuring and drawing the ruins of Roman monuments, and studying ancient authors, such as Vitruvius, Pliny, Livy, Plutarch, Quintilian and Pausanias. The precedent for such a model of behaviour had been set most conspicuously by Pirro Ligorio (1510-1583). Well known in the circles of the Roman elite for his antiquarian knowledge, Ligorio worked mainly for the Cardinal of Ferrara, Ippolito d’Este (1509-1572), but for a brief period he too had been employed by Cardinal Alessandro Farnese⁶⁸. Having settled in Rome around 1534, Ligorio took the opportunity to study the physical remains of the past *in situ* as they were unearthed in various sites around Rome. The Neapolitan’s intense interest in antiquities is confirmed not only by his own drawings of Roman monuments, which was common practice among the young artists who poured into Rome, but also by his studies of

⁶³ C. Acidini Luchinat, *Taddeo e Federico Zuccari: fratelli pittori del Cinquecento*, Milan, 1998, vol. II, pp. 103-113, 199-227.

⁶⁴ G. Corti, ‘Two Early Seventeenth-Century Inventories Involving Giambologna’, *The Burlington Magazine*, 118, 1976, pp. 629-634.

⁶⁵ V. Avery, ‘The House of Alessandro Vittoria Reconstructed’, *The Sculpture Journal*, v, 2001, pp. 7-32, where the artist’s collection of paintings, drawings and two antique busts are analysed.

⁶⁶ De Borja de San Román y Fernández, *El Greco en Toledo*, pp. 140-142, in *El Greco: Documents on His Life and Work*, pp. 246-247; Brown, ‘El Greco and Toledo’, in *El Greco of Toledo*, p. 100; *El Greco*, exh. cat., ed. D. Davies, New York/London, 2004, pp. 36-38.

⁶⁷ *El Greco of Toledo: Painter of the Visible and the Invisible*, exh. cat., ed. F. Marías, Toledo, 2014, p. 34.

⁶⁸ Mandowsky & Mitchell, *Pirro Ligorio’s Roman Antiquities*, pp. 1-34; F. Haskell, *History and its Images: Art and the Interpretation of the Past*, New Haven & London, 1993, pp. 57-58.

ancient inscriptions and coins⁶⁹. Ligorio's map of Rome and the engravings of the Baths of Diocletian, the Circus Maximus, the Circus Flaminius and the Praetorian Camp are testimonies of his extensive knowledge of Roman antiquity. His love for ancient Rome and its world was in perfect tune with the antiquarian interests of the Roman circles he frequented, leading to a 'union of art and learning'⁷⁰, probably under his friend, Fulvio Orsini's encouragement. Soon Ligorio was capable of offering his professional opinion on archaeological matters, just as contemporary humanists did⁷¹. His case constitutes a profound change in the perception of the social status of artists, who aspired to participate in the study of antiquity on the same terms as men of letters.

Like Raphael, whom he greatly admired⁷², Ligorio showed a deep concern with the importance of visual documentation of the ancient world, and succeeded in standing out from all his peers due to his experience in and knowledge of antiquities. His activities certainly point to an erudite audience that desired to recover Rome's past glory by correlating the philological study of literary sources with the excavation and collection of antique sculpture. Considering his role in this light, it is significant to read what Agustín said about him in a letter to Orsini in 1571: 'Now that Onofrio [Onofrio Panvinio] and Egio [Benedetto Egio] are dead and Pirro and Manuzio have departed from Rome, I grieve with you, who will go next?'⁷³ Agustín's reference to an artist in the same breath as such eminent polymaths was an exceptional honour. Indeed, Agustín praised both Ligorio's drawings and his knowledge of antiquity,

⁶⁹ E. Mandowsky, 'Some Observations on Pyrrho Ligorio's Drawings of Roman Monuments in Cod. B. XIII 7 at Naples', *Rendiconti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia*, xxvii, 1951-1952, pp. 335-358, esp. p. 336, note 4. In his well-known, but unpublished, work about the ancient ruins of Rome (1550-1553), extended into forty books and filled with drawings and comments, part of which can be seen today at the National Library of Naples, Ligorio aspired to record all the sites of ancient Rome. Unfortunately, he managed to publish only two small books, bound together into one volume, without illustrations, in Venice in 1553; Mandowsky, 'Some Observations on Pyrrho Ligorio's Drawings of Roman Monuments', p. 338.

⁷⁰ Brown, 'El Greco and Toledo', in *El Greco of Toledo*, p. 82.

⁷¹ Ligorio disagreed with the form of structure on which the *Fasti Capitolini* had been placed, and like Fulvio, he expressed his concerns about the highly admired Laocoön; see ch. 5, note 2; Haskell & Penny, *Taste and the Antique*, p. 246; Wren Christian, 'Raphael's 'Philemon' and the Collecting of Antiquities in Rome', p. 761, where Ligorio is characterized as "a famously unreliable source on antiquities"; I, on the other hand, tend to agree with Mandowsky's opinion who thought that Ligorio was a competent antiquarian and "his wide experiences as an antiquary...had trained him to adopt a method which was strictly archaeological in the modern sense" (Mandowsky, 'Some Observations on Pyrrho Ligorio's Drawings of Roman Monuments', p. 347).

⁷² D.R. Coffin, 'Pirro Ligorio on the Nobility of the Arts', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, xxvii, 1964, p. 205, note 56: "...dovemo riguardare ai buoni...Nella pittura il piacevole Raphaele da Urbino...".

⁷³ Mandowsky & Mitchell, *Pirro Ligorio's Roman Antiquities*, p. 33.

despite the Neapolitan's difficulties with Latin⁷⁴. On this matter the Spanish scholar wrote in his Fourth Dialogue on medals: 'I have not seen medals of the Circus Maximus and the others that existed in Rome, except some drawings by Pirro Ligorio from Naples, an acquaintance of mine, who is a great antiquarian and painter who, though ignorant of Latin, has written more than forty books on coins, architecture and other things'⁷⁵. Conversely, Fulvio's respect for Ligorio did not wane as the years went by, and he recommended him anew to Cardinal Farnese for the position of his personal architect after Vignola's death in 1573⁷⁶, because he successfully combined the skills of a painter and an architect with those of a competent antiquarian. In fact, his competence as an expert antiquarian seems to have overshadowed his other artistic activities to the degree that in 1567 he was receiving a monthly stipend of 10 *scudi* from Cardinal Farnese for his knowledge as an antiquarian⁷⁷. More than any other artist, Pirro managed to establish his reputation as a connoisseur among antiquarians of the calibre of Fulvio Orsini and Antonio Agustín. Not surprisingly, at the court of Ferrara Ligorio was employed not as a painter or as an architect, but as the ducal antiquarian, succeeding Enea Vico (1523-1567) in the role.

One way in which artists appear to have asserted their credentials as more than mere craftsmen was in possession of books. Recent studies of the inventories of artists' libraries, including those of Alessandro Vittoria and Durante Alberti (1538-1613)⁷⁸, an associate of Federico Zuccaro, provide some evidence of the literary pursuits of their owners, even though the historical assessment of the phenomenon is still at an early stage. It has been argued that the libraries of artists were usually average in size and contained a mixture of religious works and history books (more

⁷⁴ A. Agustín, *I discorsi del S. Don Antonio Agostini sopra le medaglie et altre anticaglie divisi in XI dialoghi tradotti dalla lingua spagnuola nell' italiana*, [Venezia], [s.a] p. 66.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 66: "Del circo Massimo, e d' altri che erano in Roma non n' ho vedute medaglie, ma solamente n' ho veduti certi disegni di Pirro Ligori Napoletano mio conoscente grande antiquario, e pittore, il quale senza saper latino ha scritto più di quaranta libri di medaglie, d' ediftij, e d' altre cose". In the Venetian edition of the *Discorsi*, Agustín calls Ligorio 'mio conoscente', and according to this edition we have translated the above passage, while in the Roman edition of 1592 used by Erna Mandowsky and Charles Mitchell, he calls Ligorio 'amico mio'; Mandowsky & Mitchell, *Pirro Ligorio's Roman Antiquities*, p. 31.

⁷⁶ C. Robertson, 'El Greco, Fulvio Orsini and Giulio Clovio', in *El Greco of Crete: Proceedings of the International Symposium*, pp. 215-227, esp. p. 219; Alessandro Farnese had already chosen Giacomo della Porta (1537-1602) as Vignola's successor; C. Robertson, *'Il Gran Cardinale': Alessandro Farnese, Patron of the Arts*, New Haven & London, 1992, pp. 236-237.

⁷⁷ Robertson, *'Il Gran Cardinale'*, p. 50.

⁷⁸ G. Soergel Panofsky, 'An Artist's Library in Rome around 1600', in *Ars naturam adiuvans. Festschrift für Matthias Winner*, ed. V. Flemming & S. Schütze, Mainz am Rhein, 1996, pp. 367-380; J. Bialostocki, 'Doctus Artifex and the Library of the Artist in the 16th and 17th Century', in *De Arte et Libris: Festschrift Erasmus, 1934-1984*, Amsterdam, 1984, pp. 11-22.

rarely philosophical), books about their profession, as well as more general works concerning well-mannered behaviour, such as Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano*⁷⁹, or dancing and fencing, such as Camillo Agrippa's *Trattato di scientia d' arme* (1553, *Treatise on the Science of Arms*). Unsurprisingly, a copy of Agrippa's treatise appears among El Greco's Italian books⁸⁰. Given that the Milanese architect and engineer (d.1600) frequented the Farnese household for some time⁸¹, it is plausible that Domenicos came to possess this book during his Roman sojourn. In fact, it is probable that many of the books that were recorded in the painter's collection in Spain were either acquired, or first encountered, in Italy. And it certainly makes sense, as we shall see, that his interest in books about art, such as Vasari's *Lives of the Artists*, and his interest in works from ancient Greece were cultivated in the Farnese circle.

Domenicos' Books

Important information has subsisted concerning the books which El Greco had in his library, providing an invaluable insight into his intellectual interests, and his scholarly pretensions. The inventories of his belongings – established after the painter's death in 1614 - were published by Francisco de Borja de San Román y Fernández in his book *El Greco en Toledo: Nuevas investigaciones acerca de la vida y obras de Dominico Theotocópuli* in 1910. And what can be stated unequivocally from a quick examination of the painter's inventory is that Domenicos had a wide-ranging mind, and was very keen on learning. Rich in ancient and contemporary authors, his library is a consistent collection, and reflects the interests of a painter, an architect, a reader well-versed in literary sources – that is to say, an intellectual. Although the 1614 inventory of Domenicos' possessions listed around 130 titles of books, it seems that this number constitutes only a portion of the library that once belonged to the Greek painter. Appian's *Civil Wars*, for example, together with his

⁷⁹ Bialostocki, 'Doctus Artifex and the Library of the Artist in the 16th and 17th Century', p. 13, where the historian mentions the example of Rosso who possessed a copy of Castiglione's *Cortegiano*; S. McPhee, 'Bernini's Books', *The Burlington Magazine*, 142, 2000, pp. 442-448, esp. pp. 442-444.

⁸⁰ De Borja de San Román y Fernández, *El Greco en Toledo*, p. 197, in *El Greco: Documents on His Life and Work*, p. 274.

⁸¹ C. Agrippa, *Fencing: A Renaissance Treatise*, ed. K. Mondschein, New York, 2014, pp. xx-xxiii; Agrippa arrived in Rome in 1535 and was soon associated with Gerolamo Garimberto, bishop of Gallesse and Alessandro Rufino. As the editor point out "Farnese allegiance, in particular membership in the artistic circle and even the household of Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, was one common feature of this group; another was the devotion to antiquity that marks both the cardinal's circle and Agrippa's work", (*ibid*, p. xxi).

copy of Vitruvius' *Ten Books on Architecture*, both now in the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid⁸², were certainly among his books, even though they are missing from the above inventory. Also missing is his copy of the 1568 edition of Vasari's *Vite*, and it seems that certain books, including Vasari, were passed on from one artist to another, without them owning a copy themselves. Such copies were apparently not included in inventories.

One particularly striking aspect of his library is the number of ancient Greek books that he owned. Together with Xenophon, Isocrates, Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* and *Moralia*, Arrian's the *Anabasis of Alexander*, Hippocrates and Aesop's *Fables*, the Cretan had copies of works by Demosthenes, Aristophanes, Lucian, and Homer⁸³. The presence of these books suggests that Domenicos could read ancient texts in their original language, and not in translation, a skill which would probably have required help of scholarly friends. Moreover, the more obscure texts single him out as unusually erudite for a painter. Two books in his inventory are of particular interest: Aristotle's *Politics* and *Physics*. These were texts that enjoyed important

⁸² J. Bury, 'Las ideas artísticas de El Greco', (review), *The Burlington Magazine*, 125, 1983, p. 366.

⁸³ The fact that El Greco owned a copy of Homer is unusual for an artist, and therefore remarkable. If even he did not study the epic poems closely, reading and understanding them in their original language confirms his absorption of humanist learning. His interest in this unique poet in the pantheon of ancient writers, befitted a scholar or a philosopher, may be related with the influence of an earlier literary circle gathered around Angelo Colocci. Colocci's Greek friends, Janus Lascaris and Mattheus Devaris, as well as his classicist friends Guglielmo Sirleto and Cardinal Marcello Cervini, who often helped him with his studies, translating and annotating ancient texts, all shared a special interest in Homer. It was from the press of the Greek Gymnasium, sponsored by Colocci, that Lascaris printed his commentary on Homer's *Iliad* in 1517, a work which consisted of scholia that were falsely attributed to the Augustan scholar Didymus (the so-called D scholia). It seems that Lascaris' commentary also carried on his teacher's, Demetrius Chalcocondyles (1423-1511), special interest in Homer, as the famous Greek scholar was the editor of the 'edition princeps' of Homer (Florence, 1488). I strongly believe that the earlier Homeric scholarship served as a stimulus for a select circle of men gathered around the Cardinals Cervini and Farnese to continue to cultivate the study of Greek letters. As expected, Lascaris' studies on Homer exerted considerable influence on both his student, Mattheo Devaris and on Colocci's protégé, the promising Fulvio Orsini. We know, for example, that Fulvio, who must have possessed a copy of Lascaris' work, which probably came into his possession through Colocci, had also annotated the *Iliad*; De Nolhac, *La Bibliothèque*, p. 351, no 1; p. 355, no 59. His close relationship with another important classicist, Nicolò Majorano, who was also engaged with the study of Homer, contributed to the enrichment of Fulvio's library. As it seems Majorano gave him Greek books annotated by the Pistoiese Scipione Forteguerra (1466-1515), better known as Carteromachos; De Nolhac, *La Bibliothèque*, p. 351, nos 10-14; p. 352, nos 20, 22, 24, 25, 29. A shared interest in Homer can be seen running through the work of Lascaris, Fulvio, and Devaris, who had been hired to compile the *Index* of the fourth volume of Eustathius' *Scholia* on Homer on a monthly salaried basis by Pope Paul III; P. Devaris, dedicatory letter to Alessandro Farnese in M. Devarii, *Liber de graecae linguae particulis*, Lipsiae et Schleizae, 1775; Paschini, 'Un ellenista del Cinquecento: Nicolò Majorano', pp. 225-226. The same interest in Homer was apparently shared by Domenicos. For Devaris' role in the publishing of Eustathius, E. Legrand, *Bibliographie Hellénique ou description raisonnée des ouvrages publiés en grec par des Grecs aux XV^e et XVI^e siècles*, Paris, 1885, vol. I, p. 238; A. Ronchini, 'Lettere del Card. Iacopo Sadoletto e di Paolo suo nipote', *Atti e memorie delle RR. Deputazioni di storia patria per le provincie modenesi e parmensi*, 6, 1872, p. 154, note 1.

dissemination and influence in the mid-cinquecento and lead us directly to the discourses that permeated the learned circles in Italy and Toledo. The same applies to the more unusual texts found in his library, such as Ioannis Philoponus' commentary on Aristotle's *De Anima (On the Soul)*⁸⁴. The presence of this work in his library is notable for two reasons: first, because it presupposes that Domenicos knew well Aristotle's *De Anima*, which is not listed in his inventory, and secondly, because there was also a copy of Philoponus in the collection of Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, later Pope Paul III. This was probably sold to Farnese by Zacharias Calliergis (c.1473-after 1524), the father of the first Greek press in Rome (1515), and an expert on Aristotle and his ancient commentators. Calliergis is thought to have stayed in the cardinal's palace for some time⁸⁵, and was just one of a number of notable Greek scholars who had connections to the Farnese family. Among these was also Janus Lascaris (c.1445-1535), another scholar who had a copy of Philoponus' commentary⁸⁶. A possible link between these scholars and Domenicos is provided by Fulvio Orsini, who indeed owned many of the manuscripts that had once belonged to Lascaris. Another rare book in Domenicos' inventory, Artemidorus' dream work⁸⁷, might also plausibly be linked to this circle of scholars, given that Lascaris is known to have bought a copy of the text for Lorenzo de' Medici in 1492⁸⁸.

I shall argue in more detail elsewhere for the importance of Fulvio for Domenicos' burgeoning interests in learning, but it is certainly relevant in the present context to note that Orsini was an avid collector of works by Aristotle⁸⁹, and possessed both the *Poetics* and the *Nicomachean Ethics*⁹⁰. That Fulvio showed a special interest in the Greek philosopher can be also confirmed by the fact that he kept

⁸⁴ De Borja de San Román y Fernández, *El Greco en Toledo*, pp. 195-196, in *El Greco: Documents on His Life and Work*, pp. 273-274.

⁸⁵ M.R. Formentin, 'Uno Scriptorium a Palazzo Farnese?', *Scripta. An International Journal of Codicology and Palaeography*, I, 2008, pp. 77-102, esp. p. 85.

⁸⁶ P. De Nolhac, 'Inventaire des manuscrits grecs de Jean Lascaris', *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire*, vi, 1886, p. 259, no 110; p. 261, no 8; p. 264. Together with the manuscripts of Philoponus there were also Flavius Josephus' *Antiquitas Judaeorum (Antiquities of the Jews)* and St. Basil's orations in Lascaris' inventory, (*ibid*, pp. 257, 258, nos 48, 73 respectively). Not surprisingly, Domenicos' inventory also listed Josephus' *Bellum Judaeorum* and St. Basil's orations; De Borja de San Román y Fernández, *El Greco en Toledo*, pp. 195-196, in *El Greco: Documents on His Life and Work*, pp. 273-274.

⁸⁷ See note 80.

⁸⁸ R.A. Pack, 'Pascalis Romanus and the text of Artemidorus', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, 96, 1965, pp. 291-295.

⁸⁹ De Nolhac, *La Bibliothèque*, p. 351, no 10; p. 354, no 49; p. 355, no 66; p. 356, no 70; p. 357, no 95; p. 398, no 13 "Aristotelis opera omnia"; p. 398, no 18.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 354, no 49; p. 356, no 70; p. 357, no 95.

a bust of Aristotle in a leather case⁹¹, treating it as one the most precious items of his collection. Indeed, the more the ‘letterati’ continued to study Aristotle’s works, the more portraits of his were sought out and collected; and images of Greek *eruditi* were increasingly included in books of illustrious men⁹². It seems that the study and interpretation of Aristotle was still central to the intellectual life of Rome, as his extant works embraced a remarkable variety of topics. Consequently, we may venture to say that it was in the refined circles of Rome, and particularly in the company of Orsini, that Domenicos came into close contact with the Stagirite philosopher’s principal works; and not just with those listed years later in the inventory of his possessions in Toledo, but also with others, such as the *Poetics* and the *Nicomachean Ethics*⁹³.

Other books listed in Domenicos’ inventory of 1614 can also be plausibly linked to the artist’s association with Orsini and his circle. One such work, listed under the general title ‘disciplina militar’, has been identified by John Bury with Guillaume Du Choul’s treatise, *Discours sur la castrametation et discipline militaire des anciens Romains* (Lyon, 1555)⁹⁴. Given how closely related Du Choul’s book was to Roman antiquarian circles and their numismatic studies, it seems likely that the artist had already encountered the work in the Farnese household.

Domenicos’ ideas on art

As we shall see in later chapters, there are a number of works produced by Domenicos around this time that invite complex readings, and that moreover appear to reference ancient sources, including Aristotle. In chapter 5, for instance, I shall suggest an Aristotelian emphasis for both the *Fabula* and *Boy Lighting a Candle*, and it is my contention that the unusual iconography employed in these and other pictures executed in Rome demonstrate the artist’s engagement with the intellectual environment of the Farnese court. We certainly know that El Greco took a theoretical

⁹¹ J.H. Jongkees, *Fulvio Orsini’s Imagines and the Portrait of Aristotle*, Groningen, 1960, p. 30.

⁹² *Ibid*, pp. 17-21, where the author argues that Orsini used in his *Imagines* in 1570 a portrait of Aristotle based on a marble relief, which once belonged to Cardinal Jean du Bellay (1492-1560). Aristotle’s portrait followed the late medieval iconography showing the philosopher with long beard and hair, covered by a cap. In the following years, however, and certainly by 1598 Orsini had rejected this portrait in favour of a beardless type of Aristotle.

⁹³ Given that the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Politics* are accepted to be linked texts in the sense that in both Aristotle lays out his views about the character of human nature and human soul, we may suggest that Domenicos may have read the *Nicomachean Ethics* because he possessed the *Politics*.

⁹⁴ J. Bury, ‘A Source for El Greco’s *St. Maurice*’, *The Burlington Magazine*, 126, 1984, pp. 144-148.

interest in art, given his *postille* on Vitruvius' *De architectura*, in the edition of Daniele Barbaro (c.1592-1593, Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid), and on Vasari's *Vite*. His annotations on Vasari are particularly interesting, given that his copy had once belonged to Federico Zuccaro, who had also made critical comments in the margins of the same work⁹⁵, and at times Domenicos appears to be responding to both Vasari and Zuccaro. As we shall see, both sets of *postille* are highly valuable documents and further demonstrate Domenicos' familiarity with a substantial corpus of classical texts. They also provide a vivid illustration of the artist's approach to art and for this reason it is worth looking at them in some detail.

Based on the hints provided by his marginal annotations on Vitruvius, we may conclude that Domenicos was familiar with some of the ideas found in works by both Cicero and Aristotle. Two clues seem to support this suggestion; for one thing, the painter mentions Aristotle by name twice in his *postille* on Vitruvius. The first mention comes in connection with Homer, who together with Virgil and Ariosto are considered by the Cretan the trio that occupied the summit of poetry⁹⁶, a view which appears to underline Domenicos' belief in the continuity between ancient and modern culture. The second mention comes when the painter holds Aristotle up as the prime exponent of ancient philosophy in the same way that he thought Galen was responsible for bringing Graeco-Roman medicine to its zenith⁹⁷. While these name-checks prove that Domenicos held informed views about Aristotle, the Cretan used certain words which recall technical philosophical and rhetorical terms. For example, the words 'end or purpose' ('el fine')⁹⁸ and the 'middle way' ('metá/el medio')⁹⁹, which both allude to the respective famous Aristotelian concepts of 'purpose' and the

⁹⁵ Federico visited Toledo during the feast of Corpus Domini in 1586, and it was probably during this visit that he gave Domenicos his personal copy of Vasari's *Vite* as a gift. We know the date of the visit from a letter that Federico wrote from the Monastery of San Lorenzo in El Escorial on May 29, 1586 to an unknown addressee, in which he described his impressions of Toledo; Acidini Luchinat, *Taddeo e Federico Zuccari*, vol. II, p. 286, 7h.: "[A Toledo] vedissimo alla messa et vespro regio una costuma qui molto antica, che alle feste et sollemnità principale fanno comparire in Chiesa 12 giganti et doi nani danzando e sonando certi lor timpani e tamburi avanti il corpus Domini e per tutta la chiesa; parimente, otto giovinetti vestiti a mattacini facendo moresca...". The same copy of Vasari's *Vite* contains both Domenicos' and Federico's handwritten *postille*; F. Mariás, *El Greco y el arte de su tiempo. Las notas de El Greco a Vasari*, Madrid, 1992, Greek transl., Iraklion, 2001, p. 3; Z. Ważbiński, 'Lo studio –La scuola fiorentina di Federico Zuccari', *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, 29, 1985, pp. 275-346, esp. pp. 299-306; M. Koshikawa, 'El Greco and Federico Zuccaro', in *El Greco in Italy and Italian Art: Proceedings of the International Symposium* Iraklion, 1-5 Sept. 1990, Iraklion, 1995, pp. 357-371.

⁹⁶ F. Mariás & A. Bustamante, *Las ideas artísticas de el Greco*, Madrid, 1981, pp. 227, 235.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 242.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 80, 227.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 230.

‘mean’ between two extremes vices; Domenicos’ view of painting as an ‘intellectual art’ (‘mas intellectual’)¹⁰⁰, an enigmatic phrase, which we shall attempt to interpret in a following chapter and which I venture to suggest that entails the Aristotelic distinction between intellectual and moral virtues; finally, the words ‘prudence’ (‘prudencia’) and ‘teleion’¹⁰¹. Although the latter, written in Greek, is explained in connection with Plato, ‘teleion’ is a term which is usually associated with Aristotle. The Greek philosopher analysed it in at least three treatises, in the *Poetics* (VI, 2), where he presented it in his formal definition of tragedy, in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (I, vii, 3-4), and in the *Metaphysics* (IV, 16), where the term could mean either ‘complete’ in the sense of having all parts, or perfect in the sense of being the best specimen of its kind. The second meaning of ‘perfect’ seems to accord well with Domenicos’ idea of the development of art, which is discussed in connection with the idea that humanity and everyday life, despite its faults, continued to improve¹⁰². In discussing the notion of progress towards perfection, Domenicos states that the path is not straightforward as there are many who make wrong judgments, or are even deceitful¹⁰³. He goes on to say, however, that thanks to ‘universal geniuses’, progress was still being made¹⁰⁴. Principal among these universal geniuses, for Domenicos, is Palladio, an architect he evidently admired greatly, as I shall argue elsewhere. Although the immediately preceding or following comments of the phrase ‘universal geniuses’ (‘los ingenious universales’)¹⁰⁵ do not help to determine its meaning, ‘universal geniuses’ may refer to all those who possessed the principles of knowledge, and not to men of a worldwide reputation.

We can also find echoes of Cicero among Domenicos’ annotations on Vitruvius, most notably his mention of the ‘perfect orator’ (‘perfeto horador’), when he analysed the common elements between different arts, such as music and rhetoric¹⁰⁶. In his *Orator*¹⁰⁷, a treatise written three years before his death, Cicero described the ideal of the perfect orator as someone who combines learning and eloquence, philosophy and *vita active*. This is a continuation of the debate on the theory of rhetoric, which started

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, p. 227.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, p. 230.

¹⁰² *Ibid*, p. 243: “nuestra humanidad o vida cotidiana por azer era et erando se perfeciona...”.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, pp. 138, 236.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 121, 232.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, p. 121.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, p. 239; see also ch. 4, note 92.

¹⁰⁷ For Cicero’s influence, Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, pp. 151-152.

in the *De Oratore* (55 BC) and expounded in the *Brutus*, written earlier in the same year as the *Orator* (46 BC). In the *Brutus* Cicero examined the merits and defects of the most important public speakers, approaching oratory and art as a sequence of masters, who gradually led to the development of the style (*Brutus*, 70). It has been argued that Cicero's views on historical evolution served as a model for Vasari, who also expounded on the idea of the development of art in the preface of the second part of the *Lives*¹⁰⁸. Surely Domenicos' reference is not coincidental, but stems from a knowledge of Cicero's works, or at least some familiarity with the ancient rhetorical theory. Moreover, his mention of Hermogenes of Tarsus¹⁰⁹, who won fame as a young man and later wrote a treatise on rhetorical theory, clearly reflects such a familiarity, and once more appears to confirm his intellectual engagement. He was certainly aware of debates around the notion of artistic progress.

As we have already suggested, Domenicos believed in art as a progressive development through time¹¹⁰, but he does not seem to believe in the superiority of some periods over others, or in the hierarchical privilege of the old over the new¹¹¹. He stressed that he was not so keen on praising his fatherland, as Vitruvius had been, because he was a defender of modern art¹¹². Although he referred to ancient artists as

¹⁰⁸ E.H. Gombrich, 'Vasari's *Lives* and Cicero's *Brutus*', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 23, 1960, pp. 309-311; that Vasari used Cicero's *Brutus* to formulate the core of his theory on art evolution, see Gombrich, 'Vasari's *Lives* and Cicero's *Brutus*', pp. 309-310; for Cicero's influence on Vasari's definition of history, see Rubin, *Giorgio Vasari: Art and History*, pp. 152-153.

¹⁰⁹ Marías & Bustamante, *Las ideas artísticas*, p. 231; the fact that Philostratus (*Lives of the Sophists*, II, 577-578) is the earliest and most reliable source for Hermogenes' biography may confirm our suggestion that Domenicos had read Philostratus, as we shall discuss in ch. 5, and was quite familiar with this kind of texts. Aldus Manutius published the first printed edition of Hermogenes' *Art of Rhetoric* in Greek in a volume entitled *Rhetores greci* (1508).

¹¹⁰ See ch. 6, note 14; Marías & Bustamante, *Las ideas artísticas*, p. 240: "las Artes se agumentan e cressen con yl medio del tienpo eredando unos a hortos".

¹¹¹ Conversely, Vasari saw a retreat in the evolution of art when he distinguished between ancient Greek and byzantine artists ('vecchi e non antichi'), thinking the style of the latter as 'rough, clumsy and common' ('scabrosa, goffa ed ordinaria'), while their figures had staring eyes ('occhi spiritati'), hard outlines ('il non avere ombre'), pointed hands ('le mani aguzze') which, in his opinion, were monstrosities ('mostruosità'); G. Vasari, *Le Vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architetti*, Florence, 1568, ed. G. Milanesi, Florence, 1878-1881, vol. I, [proemio], xvii, p. 258: "...io chiami vecchio et antico; antiche furono le cose annanzi a Costantino, di Corinto, d'Atene e di Roma...percioché l'altre si chiamano vecchie...que' Greci, vecchi e non antichi..."; *ibid*, vol. I, [Vita di Cimabue], p. 267: "...la maniera di que' Greci, tutta piena di line e di profile così nel musaico, come nelle pitture: la qual maniera scabrosa, goffa ed ordinaria avevano non mediante lo studio..."; *ibid*, vol. II, [proemio della seconda parte], p. 109: "E si vede in questa levato via il profile che ricigneua per tutto le figure, e quegli occhi spiritati e piedi ritti in punta e le mani aguzze, e il non avere ombre ed altre mostruosità di que' Greci...". Years later, El Greco would attempt to reply to Vasari's art-theoretical positions with pointed aphoristic comments, Marías, *El Greco y su tiempo*, Greek transl., pp. 35-37, in the lives of Fra Bartolomeo and Mariotto Arbertainelli..

¹¹² Marías & Bustamante, *Las ideas artísticas*, p. 240: "En este logar poria paresser que yo por defender el nostro seculo lo abia antipuesto a los Antigos...quanto a me nobres sono (sino?) e todos es

his ‘forefathers’ (‘mis padres Griegos’)¹¹³, he dared to judge them¹¹⁴, as he constantly did with Vitruvius¹¹⁵. His criticism of antiquity certainly proves knowledge, not ignorance. He also alludes in his comments to the importance of ‘time’ (‘tiempo’), maintaining that the arts augment and grow over the course of time (‘las Artes se agumentan e cressen con yl medio del tiempo’)¹¹⁶. In the same annotation he points out that ‘years’ (‘las edades’) grow old just like men¹¹⁷. The metaphor does not appear to have been used as a simple rhetorical device, but as something essential, emphasizing the natural process of art, echoing Aristotle, who in his *Physics*, stated that time was by its nature the cause of decay (*Physics*, IV, 221a-b). It is possible that Domenicos used the meaning of ‘years’ in this case as some kind of period frame that appears to be opposed to ‘tiempo’, which evidently indicated a chronological order¹¹⁸, given that he uses it in conjunction with the words ‘augment and grow’ (‘agumentan e cressen’). The development of art as a process of natural growth was something of a commonplace, ultimately deriving from Plato (*Phaedrus*, 269c-d) and used by Cicero and Quintilian extensively¹¹⁹. Thus, Domenicos made art seem part of nature, and imitation part of the process of natural development.

One of the most intriguing words that Domenicos uses in his marginal comments on Vitruvius, and he uses it several times, is ‘prudence’ (‘prudencia’)¹²⁰. The meaning of the word, which appears to have intense rhetorical, political and philosophical connotations, is rather obscure, but Aristotle gave a lengthy account of the virtue ‘phronesis’ (‘prudence’) in the sixth book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. According to Aristotle, the virtues were divided into intellectual and moral; prudence, which was classified as an intellectual virtue because it was based on experience,

hobre y –todo es- la misma cosa pues que no son tan yclinado a los mios come nel passado capitol o lo vemos engelfado Vitruvio por su patria”.

¹¹³ *Ibid*, p. 235.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 230: “en soma se yo digo lo que siento paresco a los supertiziosos de lantiqidad maldizente...”; *ibid*, p. 240.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 231: “los entercolonio de medio del templo e estilos le aze [Vitruvius] caer da eror a eror e contradiziendosse alla et aqui e para que si fallita...”.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 240.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 240: “...no ay duda que tabien las edades le van sus enfermedades come los mismos hobres por los varios azidentes...”.

¹¹⁸ It is interesting in this context to mention that Vasari also made this distinction between ‘tempo’ and ‘tempi’; Ph. Sohm, ‘Ordering History with Style: Giorgio Vasari on the Art of History’, in *Antiquity and Its Interpreters*, eds. A. Payne, A. Kuttner & R. Smick, Cambridge, 2000, pp. 40-54.

¹¹⁹ M.T. Cicero, *De Oratore*, Engl. transl. H. Rackham, Loeb Classical Library, Harvard, 1942, Book II, xxi, 88-89, pp. 263-265; Book II, xxx, 131, p. 293; Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, Engl. transl. D. A. Russel, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge Mass., 2001, Book XII, x, 25, p. 295.

¹²⁰ Marías & Bustamante, *Las ideas artisticas*, pp. 225, 227, 228, 241.

signified the practical wisdom that ‘forms opinions’¹²¹, or is the practical perception of appropriate action in particular circumstances¹²². ‘Phronimos’ does not simply know, but he acts. These concerns coalesce in Cicero. For Cicero, too, prudence meant the practical knowledge of things, the practical training, the active participation in civic life, which is ranked above theoretical knowledge of things, represented by ‘sophia’ or ‘sapientia’¹²³. Thus, Cicero brought the classical moral closer to political thought. It cannot be merely coincidence that Vasari also referred to the prudent person and prudence respectively. In the preface of the second part of his *Lives* Vasari wrote that history teaches men how to live and makes them prudent¹²⁴, allying himself with Cicero. Domenicos meanwhile went a step further and related prudence to painting¹²⁵. By doing so he seems to have adopted the Aristotelian concept that ‘art is a rational quality’¹²⁶, in other words that painting involved intellect and was concerned with both deliberating or devising and producing. By allying art with prudence, Domenicos saw the former as a distinctive mode of intelligence, as a capacity of reasoning about difficult matters in order to select the best course of action.

As both Vasari and El Greco were immersed in the erudite environment of the Farnese household, it seems reasonable to assume that some of these ideas came out of their interaction with that environment. It is certainly the case that Aristotle’s idea of prudence and Cicero’s ideal orator were concepts that would have been familiar to Orsini and his circle. As well as works by Aristotle, Orsini’s inventory shows that he owned books and manuscripts of Cicero¹²⁷, a fact that reflects his predilection for oratory¹²⁸, evidently as an essential part of his Greek studies. Indeed it may have been the case that Orsini provided Domenicos with excerpted passages of Cicero that were not available in the vernacular¹²⁹. What is beyond doubt, given the kinds of books in

¹²¹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Engl. transl. H. Rackham, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge Mass., [1926], reprinted 2003, Book VI, v, 1-8, pp. 337-341.

¹²² *Ibid*, Book VI, vii, 7, pp. 345-347; viii, 5, pp. 349-351.

¹²³ Cicero, *De Oratore*, Book II, i, 5, p. 201.

¹²⁴ Vasari, *Vite*, vol. II, [proemio della seconda parte], p. 94: “...che in vero insegna vivere e fa gli uomini prudenti..”.

¹²⁵ Mariás & Bustamante, *Las ideas artisticas*, p. 165: “...la pintura tiene un puesto de prudencia...”.

¹²⁶ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VI, iv, 6, pp. 335-337.

¹²⁷ De Nolhac, *La Bibliothèque*, p. 385, no 50; p. 386, no 55; p. 387, no 67; p. 390, nos 108, 109; p. 398, no 25; p. 399, nos 36, 37; p. 400, nos 62, 66; p. 401, no 87.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 353, no 36: “Rhetori greci, tocco dal Carteromacho, coperto di corame nero, d’ Aldo”; p. 355, no 68: “Oratori greci, con emendationi mie et scholij, legato alla greca in corame nero”.

¹²⁹ The *edition princeps* of the *Brutus* came out in Rome in 1469 in the same volume with *De oratore* and the *Orator*; Rubin, *Giorgio Vasari: Art and History*, p. 163.

his possession and the informed comments contained in his *postille*, is that El Greco was a painter of some intellect. Since Orsini owned many paintings by El Greco, and clearly shared many of the same interests, a connection between them seems self-evident. And being Greek himself, Domenicos may have been particularly attractive to Orsini and others attached to the Farnese court, where Greek letters were much prized. The demonstration of erudition, either through linguistic competence in Latin or Greek, or through expertise in ancient art, was a key attribute for those trying to access the elevated circles of Rome, and to attract the attention of a rich patron, because it acted as a social barrier that safeguarded the few. For Domenicos, the erudite atmosphere of Rome moreover offered the chance to re-connect to his own classical background, and bring the Italian Renaissance spirit to his post-Byzantine Cretan upbringing.

**Chapter 2: Titian, Tintoretto and Palladio:
El Greco Between Venice and Rome**

The key document for dating El Greco's arrival in Rome in 1570 is a letter in which the miniaturist, Giulio Clovio (1498-1578), recommends the painter's services to Alessandro Farnese. Given its importance, it is worth citing the letter here in full:

To Cardinal Farnese

November 16, 1570

There has arrived in Rome a young man from Candia, a pupil of Titian, who in my opinion is exceptionally talented in painting; he has done, among other things, a self-portrait which has astonished all the painters in Rome. I should like to keep him under the auspices of your Most Illustrious and Most Reverend Lordship, without any other financial obligations, only a room in the Palazzo Farnese, for a short time until he manages to find better lodging. Therefore, I pray and beseech you to have the kindness to write to Count Ludovico [Tedesco] your majordomo to provide him a room in the upper floor of the palace. Thus, your Holiness will do a virtuous deed, worthy of you and I shall be obliged to you for it. I kiss your hands with reverence

The most humble servant of your Most Illustrious and Most Reverent Lordship

Don Giulio Clovio¹.

This letter raises a number of key issues, chiefly how the painter was known to Clovio, and under what conditions he was given accommodation in the Palazzo Farnese. I will consider these points in detail in the following chapter. Here, however, I want to focus on just one aspect of Clovio's description of Domenicos: his reference

¹ Ronchini, 'Giulio Clovio', *Atti e memorie delle RR. Deputazioni di storia patria per le provincie modenesi e parmensi*, iii, 1865, pp. 259-270, esp. p. 270, document vii; also repr. in *El Greco: Documents of His Life and Work*, ed. N. Hadjinicolaou, Rethymno, 1990, p. 89:

"Al Cardinale Farnese

A di 16 di novembre 1570

È capitato in Roma un giovane Candiotto, discepolo di Titiano, che a mio giuditio parmi raro nella pittura; et, fra l' altre cose, egli ha fatto un ritratto da se stesso che fa stupire tutti questi Pittori di Roma. Io vorrei trattenerlo sotto l' ombra di S.V. Illma. et Revma. senza spesa altra del vivere, ma solo de una stanza nel Palazzo Farnese per qualche poco di tempo, cioè per fin che egli si venghi ad accomodare meglio. Però La prego et supplico sia contenta di scrivere al Co.[nte] Lud.[ovi]co [Tedeschi] suo Maiord[omo] che lo provvegghi nel detto Palazzo di qualche stanza ad alto; chè V.S. Illma. farà un' opera virtuosa degna di Lei, et io gliene terrò obbligo. Et Le bascio con reverenza le mani

Di V.S. Illma. et Revma. humilissimo servitore, Don Julio Clovio".

to the Cretan as a ‘discepolo di Titiano’. This telling phrase reminds us that El Greco came to Rome from Venice, where it appears that he had already begun to explore some of the concerns and aspirations that would occupy him in Rome. I will, therefore, use this chapter to investigate what we know about his artistic activities and interests in Venice, in order to build up a picture of the artist as he entered a new phase in his career.

The art of Titian formed a magnetic attraction for many painters visiting Venice, and it appears that El Greco was among those who managed to gain access to his studio. Clovio’s reference to the influence of Titian in Domenicos’ formation is echoed by an entry in Fulvio Orsini’s inventory, which mentions a picture of a *View of Mount Sinai* made by a Greek disciple connected to Titian (‘di mano d’un Grego scolare di Titiano’)². The fact that Domenicos was remembered by his contemporaries as a disciple of Titian rather than of, for instance, Tintoretto or Veronese, to mention two of the most famous Venetian masters of the time, may indicate that he was also promoting himself as a follower of Titian, who was better known in Rome³. Given Titian’s fame as a portraitist, not to mention Cardinal Farnese’s liking for his art, it is probable that Clovio stressed Domenicos’ association with the Venetian master in order to attract the cardinal’s attention. Evidently he was persuasive, because the newcomer was eventually offered lodgings at the Farnese Palace in Rome, as we will discuss further in the next chapter.

It is interesting, however, that Clovio used the word ‘discepolo’ (lat. discens/-ntis <disco-discere, which means to learn), which may indicate a ‘follower’, rather than the word ‘allievo’ (lat. alumnus < alo-alere, which means to supply a person with food), which suggests a pupil or assistant, dependent on the master. When, for example, Clovio presented the Flemish Bartolomeus Spranger (1546-1611) to Cardinal Farnese in 1568, he introduced him as his ‘allievo’⁴. The use of words is

² De Nolhac, ‘Les collections de Fulvio Orsini’, p. 433, no 39.

³ Titian had visited Rome in the winter of 1545-1546 at the invitation of the Farnese, for whom he had painted portraits of their family, together with the *Danaë* (Gallerie Nazionali di Capodimonte, Naples) and a now lost *Ecce Homo*; Jestaz, ‘Le collezioni Farnese di Roma’, in *I Farnese: Arte e collezionismo*, p. 53; A. Gentili, ‘Titian’s Venetian Commissions: Events, Contexts, Images, 1537-1576’, in *Late Titian and the Sensuality of Painting*, exh. cat., ed. S. Ferino-Pagden, Venice, 2008, pp. 44-45. Michelangelo, who probably saw the *Danaë* in Titian’s studio in the papal palace of the Belvedere, criticised the Venetians, saying that they did not learn how to draw (‘disegnare bene’); Vasari, *Vite*, vol. VII, p. 447.

⁴ A. Pérez de Tudela, ‘Documenti inediti su Giulio Clovio al servizio della famiglia Farnese’, *Aurea Parma*, ii, 2000, pp. 281-307, esp. p. 298, note 60; G. Tagliaferro, ‘In the Workshop with Titian, 1548-

highly interesting, but we probably miss some of their deeper meaning, as both ‘allievo’ and ‘discepolo’ have usually been translated simply as ‘pupils’. The painters to whom the term is applied are thus assumed to have, either an early training, or an involvement in, or sometimes collaboration with the master’s projects. Given that Clovio’s use of the word ‘discepolo’ could not have stemmed from an intimate knowledge of how the Venetian’s workshop in the Calle dei Biri Grande functioned, one must presume that a more general connection was being implied. This interpretation concurs with Giulio Mancini’s description of El Greco as having studied Titian’s works while in Venice⁵. It should also be stressed at this point that the word ‘discepolo’ could be used to denote different things, depending on the context in which the word was used. For instance, Titian himself used the word in a letter to Philip II, dated December 2, 1567, to introduce one of his apprentices (‘..un altro molto valente giovine mio discepolo..’)⁶. Scholarship has posited that Titian’s letter refers to Palma Giovane (c.1548-1628), who was indeed ‘young’ (‘giovine’), that is to say just nineteen, when he started in Titian’s studio around 1567⁷. Domenicos, on the other hand, was twenty-five at the time and already an accomplished artist, so the relationship with Titian must have been quite different. It is difficult, however, to be sure about the precise nature of the Cretan’s association with the Venetian master, given that there are no documents or drawings by Domenicos from this time – with the sole exception of a drawing after Michelangelo’s *Day* - to testify to his activity.

Titian’s workshop was a complex one, in which a solid nucleus of relatives, such as Orazio Vecellio (c.1522/25-1576) and Marco Vecellio (1545-1611), were assisted by old and trusted members, such as Girolamo Dente⁸, also known as Girolamo di Tiziano; Cesare Vecellio; the German Emmanuel Amberger; Giovanni Maria Verdizzotti, whom Vasari met at Titian’s studio in 1566⁹; and the mosaicists

1576’, in *Late Titian and the Sensuality of Painting*, p. 76, where the author mentions that Simone Peterzano was declaring himself as ‘Titiani alumnus’.

⁵ Mancini, *Considerazioni sulla pittura*, p. 230, in El Greco’s life: “...havendo studiato in Venetia et in particolare le cose di Titiano...”.

⁶ The letter was first published by J.A. Crowe & G.B. Cavalcaselle, *Titian: His Life and Times*, London, 1877, vol. II, p. 381, Appendix, p. 536; for the letter see also *Da Tiziano a El Greco: per la storia del manierismo a Venezia 1540-1590*, exh. cat., ed. R. Pallucchini, Milan, 1981, p. 64.

⁷ M. Roy Fischer, ‘Titian’s Assistants During the Later Years’, Ph.D. thesis, Harvard Uni., Cambridge, Mass., 1958, New York & London, 1977, pp. 43-114.

⁸ Vasari, *Vite*, vol. VII, p. 468, note 2, where Girolamo Dente is wrongly named Girolamo Dante and Gaetano Milanese notes for him: “Attese assai a copiare le opere del maestro; e queste copie, come ognun s’immagina, passano ordinariamente per originali”; D. Von Hadeln, ‘Girolamo di Tiziano’, *The Burlington Magazine*, 65, 1934, pp. 84-88.

⁹ Vasari, *Vite*, vol. VII, p. 460.

Francesco and Valerio Zuccato. Their task was to produce variants and replicas, design compositions and finish canvases¹⁰, in order to meet demand mainly from clients outside Venice. Domenicos does not seem to have belonged to the inner circle of apprentices and assistants, whose presence was closely tied to the regular production of the workshop. There was, however, a parallel circle around Titian consisting of collaborators, and what Tietze-Conrat called ‘occasional helpers’¹¹, foreign and local, such as Jan van Calcar, Lambert Sustris, Christoph Schwarz, Polidoro da Lanciano, Simone Peterzano and Damiano Mazza¹². Domenicos may have had access to this outer group of artists who, as would be normal in any family *bottega* in Venice, were encouraged to study different types of preparatory works, such as sketches, *abbozzi* (painted sketches) and *modelli* (oil-sketches), and to copy replicas of the master’s earlier compositions¹³. At this point it is likely that El Greco was exploring Titian’s influence, by studying forms and figures from his works.

That El Greco was not professionally attached to Titian may also be implied by the fact that the painter was clearly looking for inspiration elsewhere at this time, as is demonstrated by the aforementioned drawing after Michelangelo’s *Day* (Staatliche Graphische Sammlung, Munich) (fig. 1). Acquired by Vasari for his *Libro de’ disegni* some time before his death in 1574¹⁴, this drawing shows that El Greco was fusing varied artistic influences. The drawing was first published in 1929 by Engelbert Baumeister, who correctly read the name of the artist in the lower part as ‘Domenico Greco’, overturning a previous attribution to Donato Creti (1671-1749) from Cremona¹⁵. Both the subject matter of the drawing and the monumentality of the foreshortened figure point directly to Michelangelo’s eponymous sculpture for the

¹⁰ E. Tietze-Conrat, ‘Titian’s Workshop in His Late Years’, *The Art Bulletin*, xxvi, 1946, pp. 76-88, esp. p. 79.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

¹² Tagliaferro, ‘In the Workshop with Titian, 1548-1576’, in *Late Titian and the Sensuality of Painting*, pp. 71-77; E.M. Dal Pozzolo, ‘La ‘bottega’ di Tiziano: sistema solare e buco nero’, *Studi Tizianeschi*, iv, 2006, pp. 53-98.

¹³ D. Gisolfi, ‘Collaboration and Replicas in the Shop of Paolo Veronese and His Heirs’, *Artibus et Historiae*, 28, 2007, pp. 73-86; for Titian’s sketches, *abbozzi* and *modelli*, see Tietze-Conrat, ‘Titian’s Workshop in His Late Years’, pp. 80-87.

¹⁴ O. Kurz, ‘Giorgio Vasari’s ‘Libro de’ Disegni’’, *Old Master Drawings*, 45, 1937, pp. 1-15, esp. p. 4; O. Kurz, ‘Giorgio Vasari’s ‘Libro de’ Disegni’’, *Old Master Drawings*, 47, 1937, p. 44.

¹⁵ E. Baumeister, ‘Eine Zeichnung des jungen Greco’, *Münchener Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst*, vi, 1929, pp. 201-203; R. Harprath, ‘El Greco: Studie nach Michelangelos ‘Giorno’’, in *Italienische Zeichnungen des 16. Jahrhunderts aus eigenem Besitz*, exh. cat., Munich, 1977, pp. 68-70; R. Harprath, ‘El Greco: Studie nach Michelangelos ‘Giorno’’, in *Zeichnungen aus der Sammlung des Kurfürsten Carl Theodor*, exh. cat., *Ausstellung zum 225jährigen Bestehen der Staatlichen Graphischen Sammlung München*, Munich, 1983, p. 28.

Medici Chapel in San Lorenzo in Florence. Yet, the fact that the figure of *Day* has been depicted upright, and not reclining, poses the question of whether Domenicos drew the figure in front of the sculpture itself in the Medici Chapel, or in a Venetian atelier, where he might have had access to a copy of it.

Wilhelm Paeseler argued in 1933 that the drawing was in fact made in Tintoretto's studio¹⁶. Attempting to interpret the unfinished left foot of the *Day*, Paeseler went on to posit that the Cretan painter must have drawn it using a copy with a broken left foot. Searching for evidence for his theory, Paeseler tracked down a reference made by Tintoretto's friend, Alessandro Vittoria, who on April 20, 1563 noted in his diary that he had bought a broken copy of Michelangelo's *Day*¹⁷. Given that Tintoretto and Vittoria became close friends and shared a penchant for Michelangelo's work, it seems possible that Tintoretto had seen Vittoria's cast after the Florentine's *Giorno*¹⁸. If, however, the upright position of the figure does indeed encourage us to think that it was not executed in front of the sculptural prototype in the Medici Chapel¹⁹, the unfinished left foot could simply stem from Domenicos' lack of interest in finishing it, giving us a possible clue of his working methods. Hugo Kehrer, who supported Paeseler's theory on this point, took the discussion a step further when he suggested that Domenicos was in Tintoretto's studio before he visited Titian's²⁰. Yet, Tintoretto (c.1518-1594) was not the only painter in Venice who was familiar with the artistic principles of Buonarroti's art. Titian had known Michelangelo's work since 1511, and he must have come into closer contact with his art during his sojourn in Rome in 1545-1546. The canvases for the ceilings of Santo

¹⁶ W. Paeseler, 'Die Münchner Greco-Zeichnung und Michelangelos Modell zur Gestalt des 'Tages' in der Medici-Kapelle', *Münchner Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst*, x, 1933, pp. xxvii-xxx.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. xxx: "Ricordo io Alessandro Vittoria chome questo die sop.o comperai un pie dil giorno di Michelangelo che fece nela sagrestia di s.to Lorenzo die Fierenza, é questo el piede zanco dil modelo di sua man e per suo pagamento e soldo contai a Nicolo Zonfino Bolognese che vende disegni, scudi tre venetiani trabocanti, e tuti dua si contento". Also D. Coffin, 'Tintoretto and the Medici Tombs', *The Art Bulletin*, xxxiii, 1951, pp. 119-125, esp. p. 121.

¹⁸ V. Avery, 'Alessandro Vittoria: the Michelangelo of Venice?', in *Reactions to the Master: Michelangelo's Effect on Art and Artists in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. F. Ames-Lewis & P. Ioannides, Aldershot, 2003, pp. 157-179, esp. p. 163.

¹⁹ For the opposite view, see N. Hadjinicolaou, 'El Greco in Italy', in *El Greco in Italy and Italian Art*, exh. cat., ed. N. Hadjinicolaou, Athens, 1995, p. 408, who suggests for El Greco's *Day* that "What we see is a product of the imagination executed in front of the original...if we glance at a photograph of the statue which must have taken from a ladder, we become aware of the liberties taken by Theotokopoulos". For Domenicos' presence at Tintoretto's studio as well as Tintoretto's influence on the artistic development of El Greco see R. Pallucchini, *Il politico del Greco della R. Galleria Estense e la formazione dell' artista*, Rome, 1937, pp. 14-15, 17.

²⁰ H. Kehrer, 'Zur Münchner Greco-Zeichnung', *Münchner Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst*, x, 1933, pp. xxx-xxxii; P. Halm- B. Degenhart- W. Wegner, *Hundert Meisterzeichnungen aus der staatlichen Graphischen Sammlung München*, Munich, 1958, p. 47, no 45.

Spirito in Isola and San Giovanni Evangelista clearly indicate how much Titian was influenced by Michelangelo, as do the four tortured giants, *Tityus*, *Sisyphus*, *Tantalus* and *Ixion*, made for Mary of Hungary²¹.

On the other hand, it was in Tintoretto's studio, much more than in Titian's, that prints and casts of Michelangelo's sculpture were used as models for artists to practise foreshortening and complex positions of the body²². Tintoretto himself depicted Michelangelo's *Day* in an upright position at least twice, as the two surviving drawings in Christ Church Gallery in Oxford and in the Louvre attest. In the Oxford drawing (fig. 2) the Venetian master observed the figure from a low viewpoint, and depicted it by twisting the body to the left. The right leg has been put on top of the left, while the light coming from the left and from an angle higher than the head conveys a sense of lightness despite the figure's corporeal presence²³. Indeed, the use of light in Tintoretto's drawing reminds us that, according to Ridolfi, he frequently studied and drew Michelangelo's statues under lamplight²⁴. Like Tintoretto's drawings, Domenicos' *Day* is illuminated by an artificial source of light, which comes from the right-hand corner above the head of the figure. Falling from this point the light dissolves the outlines of the shoulders and breast and hides the head in the shade, leaving the expression of the face impenetrable. Yet his *Day* is 'heavier' and more monumental than Tintoretto's, and in contrast to the Venetian master, who follows Michelangelo's main motif by putting the right leg on top of the left, Domenicos depicts the right leg foreshortened and next to the left. To demonstrate his competence as a draughtsman Domenicos carefully and diligently outlined the details of the muscles of the shoulder and arm, as well as the violent twisting of the left arm towards the right knee. While Tintoretto carefully sketched the hair and beard of his *Day*, he made little attempt to record the features and the expression of the figure's

²¹ P. Joannides, *Michelangelo and His Influence: Drawings from Windsor Castle*, exh. cat., London, 1998, pp. 26-27. Michelangelo's influence can also be detected on Titian's assistants, such as Dente, who painted the figure of *Day* as Winter in his painting *The Four Seasons* (Private Collection, England); Tietze-Conrat, 'Titian's Workshop in His Late Years', p. 77; V. Thieme- F. Becker, *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, Leipzig, 1912-1947, vol. IX, pp. 81-82.

²² C. Ridolfi *Le meraviglie dell' arte. Le vite degli illustri pittori Veneti e dello stato*, Venice, 1648, ed. D.F. Von Hadeln, Berlin 1924, vol. II, p. 14: "Indi si mise à raccorre da molti parti, non senza grave dispendio, impronti di gesso tratti da marmi antichi, si fece condur da Firenze i piccioli modelli di Daniello Volterrano, cavati dalle figure delle sepolture de' Medici, poste in San Lorenzo di quella Città, cioè l'Aurora, il Crepuscolo, la Notte & il Giorno, sopra quali fece studio particolare, traendone infiniti disegni à lume di lucerna, per comporre mediante quelle ombre gagliarde, che fanno que' lumi, una maniera forte e rilevata".

²³ D.F. Von Hadeln, *Zeichnungen des Giacomo Tintoretto*, Berlin, 1922, p. 26, fig. 5.

²⁴ Ridolfi, *Le meraviglie dell' arte*, vol. II, p. 14.

face. Similarly, Domenicos paid particular attention to the rendering of the figure's body rather than to its facial expression. Tintoretto depicts the figure isolated from its surroundings, without giving any sign of 'the uncut block, so evident in Michelangelo's figure'²⁵. This suggests that the drawing was made after a cast model, and not after the original. The same applies to Domenicos' drawing: the figure is free in space; nothing holds his *Day* back. Finally, like Tintoretto, Domenicos used black chalk heightened with white on blue paper for drawing his *Day*. These affinities lead us to think that while the nudity and the monumentality of Domenicos' figure reveal a profound debt to Michelangelo, the strong lighting, the upright position, the foreshortening and the unusual viewpoint from top to bottom lead us back to Tintoretto's studio.

If we are correct in our hypothesis that Domenicos' *Day* is structurally related to Tintoretto's drawing, then it follows that the Greek painter frequented his studio and probably met other members of his circle. Prominent among the Venetian master's acquaintances at this time was Giovanni Grimani (1506-1593), whose portrait as a cardinal was painted by Tintoretto in the 1560s (Private Collection, formerly London, P.&D. Colnaghi, 1983)²⁶. This portrait imprints on the canvas Grimani's curial aspirations²⁷, and suggests a close relationship between the sitter and the artist. An avid collector of classical art, Grimani had amassed many Greek and Roman antiquities of different sizes and materials in his palace at Santa Maria Formosa²⁸. He had also invited Giovanni da Udine, Camillo Mantovano, Francesco Salviati, Battista Franco and Federico Zuccaro to decorate the family palace and the family chapel in S. Francesco della Vigna, introducing elements of *romanitas* to both Venetian architecture and painting²⁹. The family palace, and its remarkable collections, were open to distinguished visitors to Venice, among whom we must count Domenicos himself, judging from his annotations on Vasari's *Vite*, which

²⁵ Coffin, 'Tintoretto and the Medici Tombs', p. 120; T. Nichols, *Tintoretto: Tradition and Identity*, London, 1999, p. 56

²⁶ R. Pallucchini, 'Un nuovo ritratto di Jacopo Tintoretto', *Arte veneta*, xxxvii, 1983, p. 184.

²⁷ Nichols, *Tintoretto: Tradition and Identity*, p. 30.

²⁸ P. Paschini, 'Le collezioni archeologiche dei prelati Grimani del Cinquecento', *Rendiconti: Atti della pontificia accademia romana di archeologia*, v, 1926-1927, pp. 149-190; M. Perry, 'Wealth, Art, and Display: The Grimani Cameos in Renaissance Venice', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, lvi, 1993, pp. 268-274; M. Tafuri, *Venice and the Renaissance*, Engl. transl. J. Levine, Cambridge Mass. & London, 1995, pp. 7-10.

²⁹ Acidini Luchinat, *Taddeo e Federico Zuccari*, vol. I, pp. 227-240.

include comments on Francesco Salviati's work in the palace³⁰. At the Grimani residence, Domenicos could also have seen the impressive array of ancient statuary, inscriptions and antique fragments that adorned the inner courtyard of the palace, with its Roman-style loggia, as well as the inner rooms, with their marble floors and frescoed ceilings³¹.

His familiarity with the Grimani collection is further implied by a citation of a Roman bust included in two versions of the *Healing of the Blind*, which were almost certainly painted in Venice (c.1569, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden & c.1570, The Wrightsman Collection, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) (figs. 3, 4). The depiction of a naturalistic male head in profile, which appears among the spectators on the left-hand side of both paintings, appears to be based on the marble portrait of the Emperor Vitellius, which Grimani owned. This possibility is suggested not only by the distinctive facial features of the onlooker –fleshy eyebrows, large broken nose, and double chin- but by the way that Domenicos has isolated his head, in the manner of Roman portraits on coins and medals. If this was indeed, as it appears, a deliberately knowing reference to a celebrated piece of ancient statuary, the Cretan was aligning himself with contemporary Venetian artists, including Jacopo Bassano³² and Tintoretto, who also copied the famous figure's features³³. Assuming that Domenicos did frequent Tintoretto's studio, as argued above, the Venetian master would have been the most obvious source of an introduction to the Grimani household³⁴.

If the drawing of the *Day* and the quotations from the Grimani *Vitellius* attest to Domenicos' interest in sculpture during this time, some of his paintings also show an engagement with architecture – both classical and contemporary – which may also

³⁰ Mariás, *El Greco y el arte de su tiempo*, Greek transl., p. 95; Zuccaro severely criticised Vasari's enthusiastic comments on Salviati's work in the Grimani Palace with the words "partialita & ingnorantia" and El Greco wrote "este margen es de Federico Zuccaro y cierto es ¿qué más se ha de decir de tan desverrgüenza y lástima?"; El Greco's scathing marginal note in the above copy of Vasari's *Vite* suggests that the Cretan had actually visited Palazzo Grimani during his Venetian sojourn; F. Mariás, (ed.), *El Greco of Toledo: Painter of the Visible and the Invisible*, exh. cat., Toledo, 2014, p. 24.

³¹ Perry, 'Wealth, Art, and Display: The Grimani Cameos in Renaissance Venice', pp. 268-274.

³² S. Bailey, 'Metamorphoses of the Grimani 'Vitellius'', *The J.Paul Getty Museum Journal*, 5, 1977, pp. 105-122, esp. p. 111.

³³ The identification of Vitellius' head with an onlooker in the Dresden and the Wrightsman *Healing of the Blind* has been made here for the first time. It is also possible that El Greco studied the head of Vitellius in Tintoretto's studio, as the Venetian master owned a plaster cast of it; Nichols, *Tintoretto: Tradition and Identity*, p. 30; N. Penny, *National Gallery Catalogues. The Sixteenth Century Italian Paintings: Venice 1540-1600*, London, 2008, pp. 134-135.

³⁴ See note 30 above.

have been fostered in circles close to Grimani. While Vettore Grimani had been a great patron of Jacopo Sansovino (1486-1570), his brother Giovanni favoured Andrea Palladio (1508-1580), whom he commissioned in the 1560s to build the façade of S. Francesco della Vigna. Palladio's monumental and innovative design of the church owes much to the study of the classical orders and ancient triumphal arches, such as the Arch of Trajan, which Sebastiano Serlio (1475-1554) had included in his book of architecture (*Il terzo libro*, Venice, 1540)³⁵. We know from Domenicos' annotations on both Vitruvius' *De architectura* and Vasari's *Vite* that he admired Palladio, and described him as 'the major architect' of his time³⁶. This admiration most probably began while in Venice, where he could have viewed his work in person, notably S. Francesco della Vigna, with its use of the Corinthian order. It is indeed notable that the Cretan included a number of architectural elements in the background settings of the Dresden and Metropolitan versions of the *Healing of the Blind* mentioned above. Domenicos' departure point is clearly the 'Scena Tragica' (fig. 5) of Serlio's second book on architecture (Paris, 1545), including the step in the foreground, the gate-like structure with a central statue on its pediment, which alludes to ancient triumphal arches, and the obelisk behind it in the far background of the scene³⁷. Perhaps not coincidentally, Tintoretto had painted the same architectural setting in the background of the *Washing of the Feet* (c.1547, Museo del Prado, Madrid)³⁸ (fig. 6). Like Tintoretto, Domenicos retained Serlio's idea of tall palaces on the left-hand side, repeating the palace with the Corinthian colonnade and arcade in all three versions of the *Healing of the Blind*, while leaving the right side of the picture free of buildings. In this way, he obtained a greater area of sky and exploited the theatrical qualities of the receding buildings. Although we cannot exclude the possibility that El Greco derived the above motif direct from Tintoretto, his later works, along with his comments scribbled in the margins of his copies of Vasari's *Vite* and Vitruvius' *De*

³⁵ T.E. Cooper, *Palladio's Venice: Architecture and Society in a Renaissance Republic*, New Haven & London, 2005, p. 90, fig. 92.

³⁶ Marías, *El Greco y el arte de su tiempo*, Greek transl., p. 137: "que pone al mayor arquitecto de nuestro tiempo".

³⁷ E. Fahy, 'The Miracle of Christ Healing the Blind', *The Wrightsman Collection*, vol. V, New York, 1973, pp. 100-102. It has been noted that the set of stairs by which figures enter the scene in the Metropolitan picture follow Salviati's *Visitation* (1538) and Ligorio's *Dance of Salome* (mid-1540s), both in the Oratory of S. Giovanni Decollato. Vasari also used illusionistic stairs in the Sala dei Cento Giorni in the Cancelleria (1546).

³⁸ C. Gould, 'Sebastiano Serlio and Venetian Painting', *The Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, xxv, 1962, pp. 56-64.

architectura, and the fact that he wrote a (lost) treatise on architecture³⁹, indicate that he had a penchant for this discipline.

Around this time, Domenicos also painted the *Purification of the Temple* in Washington (c.1569-1570, National Gallery of Art, Samuel H. Kress Collection) (fig. 7). Here, together with the use of receding tile floors, which is typical of Tintoretto, and the buildings visible through the arch, which are based on Serlio⁴⁰, lesser elements, such as arches, colonnades, Corinthian capitals and pilasters, resemble Palladio's architectural motifs. It has been argued that the Washington *Purification of the Temple* may have been executed in Rome, as it appears to reference both classical and contemporary sources in the papal city, including works by Raphael and Michelangelo (for example, Marcello Venusti's *Purification of the Temple* based on Buonarroti's drawings, after 1550, in The National Gallery, London)⁴¹. Yet, I would argue that their inclusion in the picture may be interpreted without recourse to the original classical and contemporary Roman models. Woodcuts and engravings were abundantly available, and many artists including Domenicos, as we shall see, owned a considerable number of prints, using them as storehouses of figural and compositional motifs. For example, the half-naked woman with her arm thrown over her head on the left recalls the female nude figure depicted in the lower right corner of the *Bacchanal of Andrians* by Titian (c. 1523-1524, Museo del Prado, Madrid). Domenicos could not have seen the *Andrians* in person, since Titian's painting was at the time already in the *studiolo* of the Duke of Ferrara, and it is unclear whether he saw a copy of the painting or a print of a similar reclining female figure, since the stock gesture of the cast arm over her head signifying deep sleep was by then well known⁴². The original

³⁹ See ch. 4, note 41.

⁴⁰ *El Greco*, [exh. cat., ed. D. Davies, New York/London, 2004], p. 88.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, p. 88; *El Greco: Identity and Transformation*, exh. cat., ed. J. Álvarez Lopera, Madrid-Rome-Athens, 1999, p. 362, where it is noted that motifs from Michelangelo and Raphael were "derived from drawings which we do not know how he [El Greco] could have seen in Venice" so "we do not exclude the possibility that he might have done the painting in the papal city at the end of 1570". The use of receding floor tiles, typical of Tintoretto, the buildings visible through the arch, which are based on Serlio's treatise, and the uncertainty in the handling of anatomy and space, however, strongly suggest an early date for this painting. The problem of dating of some of Domenicos' pictures becomes more complicated if we assume that the Cretan painted them in Venice, but he carried some of them with him in Rome, and either he continued to work on them, such as, for example, the New York *Healing of the Blind* and the Washington *Purification of the Temple*; or he used them to show off his knowledge of anatomy and foreshortening, such as, for example, his drawing of the *Day*, which was later found in Vasari's *Libro de' disegni*; or he used them as vehicles for self-advertisement, such as the *View of Mount Sinai* which, as will be discussed, was later included in the inventory of the Orsini collection.

⁴² Haskell & Penny, *Taste and the Antique*, p. 186; the motif appears in an engraving in Francesco Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* and in Giorgione's *Sleeping Venus* in Dresden (1509-1510).

source for Titian and others was most probably the sculpture known at that time as *Cleopatra*, which had been found in Rome in 1512⁴³, and drawings after the statue circulated widely. It was also engraved by Marcantonio Raimondi around 1510-1530 (Victoria & Albert Museum, London)⁴⁴, and the statue was very popular among the Renaissance artists⁴⁵.

The Washington *Purification*, then, while still Venetian in style, shows clear evidence of Domenicos' interest in quoting from a variety of figural sources, and solving spatial problems by means of architectural structures. It is furthermore possible that Domenicos' ideas on art and architecture, as expressed later in his *postille* were already being shaped by the scholarly environment of Venice, where architectural criticism and theory were cultivated. We know, for instance, that Domenicos owned a copy of Daniele Barbaro's edition of Vitruvius, and that he wrote extensive annotations in the margins not only of Vitruvius' text but also of Barbaro's commentary. And, while it has been argued that these annotations were probably written in Spain around the years 1592-1593⁴⁶, a close examination suggests that the ideas expressed were largely reliant on his artistic experience during his Italian sojourn. For instance, it was only in Venice that he could have seen Palladio's architecture at close hand and, given that Domenicos visited the Grimani palace⁴⁷, he may well have been acquainted with circles where art and architecture was being discussed and theorized. As I shall argue elsewhere, the Cretan certainly seems to show an interest in ancient and contemporary architecture over the next few years as a member of the Farnese household in Rome. And it is possible that his decision to go to Rome was influenced at least in part by an interest in both classical ruins and innovative contemporary architecture that had already been awakened in Venice. Others factors were at work too, of course, not least the probability that Domenicos'

⁴³ *Ibid*, pp. 184-187, no 24; Ph.P. Bober & R. Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists & Antique Sculpture: A Handbook of Sources*, Oxford, 1986, p. 115, cat. no 80.

⁴⁴ Bober & Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists & Antique Sculpture*, pp. 113-114, cat. no 79 & fig. 79; the statue of Ariadne was acquired by Pope Julius II in 1512 for the Vatican statue court, where it was adapted to form a fountain on an antique marble sarcophagus. Ariadne and the sarcophagus also appear in a drawing by Francisco de Hollanda (The Escorial Sketchbook, El Escorial, Madrid); *ibid*, fig. 79a. Later, under Pope Julius III, the statue was removed and installed in the Stanza della Cleopatra.

⁴⁵ M. Meiss, 'Sleep in Venice: Ancient Myths and Renaissance Proclivities', *Proceedings in American Philosophical Society*, 110, 1966, pp. 348-382, esp. pp. 352, 369, figs. 21, 22; Brown, 'El Greco and Toledo', in *El Greco of Toledo*, p. 78.

⁴⁶ F. Marías, 'El Greco's Artistic Thought: From Eyes of the Soul to the Eyes of the Reason', in *El Greco: Identity and Transformation*, p. 166.

⁴⁷ See above note 30.

brother was helping the painter financially between the years 1567-1569⁴⁸, but was in deep trouble in the 1570s, meaning that the painter was short of money. And no doubt he was also eager to seek a bigger market where the production of art was minimally regulated by the local guild. But Rome would have held other enticements for the intellectually curious artist.

In conclusion, it seems evident that the drawing of *Day*, alongside the architectural background settings used in the Dresden and Metropolitan *Healing of the Blind*, and the Corinthian columns adorning the buildings in the Washington *Purification of the Temple*, reflect Domenicos' new interests and experiences. It is also highly likely that the transformation of his style during the latter stage of his Venetian sojourn owed much to his awareness of the burgeoning rivalry between Titian and Tintoretto and of the inherent tension between these two contrary styles. It seems, however, that Domenicos did not intend merely to copy his models; he meant to surpass them, and possibly saw them as a challenge that demanded a response. In particular, his *Day* constitutes a thorough study of Michelangelo's efforts seen primarily through Tintoretto's re-reading of the artist⁴⁹. Moreover, the foreshortened viewpoints and architectural settings in his above-mentioned pictures record a sort of 'departure' from the Venetian tradition represented by Titian, with whom Domenicos' name was often associated. Indeed, they seem to open up an artistic 'dialogue' with Michelangelo, and the art of Central Italy concerning the principles of painting, as if in preparation for his sojourn in Rome.

⁴⁸ Panayotakis, 'Manoussos the Pirate: 1571-1572', in *El Greco in Italy and Italian Art, Proceedings of the International Symposium*, p. 18.

⁴⁹ Nichols, *Tintoretto: Tradition and Identity*, p. 54-56: "His [Tintoretto's] casts after Michelangelo sculpture would, in particular, have given a very distorted impression of the originals, born in an objective sense –as a result of their small scale, low-grade material and diverse finish- and subjectively –as inevitable stylistic interpretations of the originals".

Chapter 3: Giulio Clovio's Letter of Recommendation

Our knowledge of Domenicos' presence in Rome depends principally on the letter from Giulio Clovio that we cited in the previous chapter and on El Greco's own letter to the same cardinal two years later, when he was asked to leave the Farnese Palace. There is also a passing reference to Domenicos in the books of the Academy of St. Luke, as well as a probable allusion to him and Giulio Clovio in Pirro Ligorio's treatise on the nobility of the arts. Given the paucity of documentary evidence, it is worth analysing each of these sources in detail to consider the implications of what they tell us about the painter's activities in Rome. In the present chapter I shall focus on what we can learn from Clovio's letter and how it can help us to speculate on key issues, including how El Greco came to the attention of Clovio and what the nature of his services to the cardinal was. Published for the first time by Amadio Ronchini in 1865 and repeated in every study about the artistic activity of El Greco in Rome, Clovio's letter gives us scant, but important, information about the Cretan painter.

Exactly when and with whom El Greco arrived in Rome remains a mystery, and one which has fired the imagination of art historians for some time. Lionello Puppi, for example, has argued that El Greco travelled from Venice to Rome as a member of the escort of the Venetian envoy, Giovanni Soranzo, who left the *Serenissima* hurriedly before mid-September 1570 and arrived in Rome by the end of the same month¹. If this were the case, Domenicos must have resided temporarily at Palazzo Venezia, the formal residence of the Venetian ambassadors in Rome². Although the connection between Domenicos and Giovanni Soranzo is at best tenuous, this daring theory correctly insists on an important point, namely that sixteenth-century travellers rarely undertook a journey un-escorted because of the danger of banditry³. Either as a member of a company of merchants or travellers or, according to Puppi, as a member of a diplomatic mission, Domenicos arrived in Rome some time before November 1570.

Although Clovio does not mention Domenicos by name in his letter, it has been unanimously agreed that the phrase 'a young man from Candia' ('giovane Candiotto') refers to Domenicos Theotocopoulos. We have already discussed the importance of

¹ L. Puppi, 'El Greco in Italy and Italian Art', in *El Greco: Identity and Transformation*, p. 101.

² *Ibid.*, p. 101.

³ F. Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, Engl. transl. S. Reynolds, California, [1st ed. Paris, 1949], 1995, vol. II, p. 746.

Clovio's reference to Domenicos' relationship with Titian's studio. The next significant sentence in the letter is the one where Clovio praises Domenicos' rare talent by singling out his self-portrait, a work that had 'astonished all the painters of Rome'⁴. It is to this aspect of Domenicos' activity that we turn now. As a man who kept an eye on artistic matters and was a competent artist himself, Clovio was well qualified to judge Domenicos ('a mio giudizio parmi'). The phrase 'raro nella pittura' conveys a clear sense that the newcomer was an outstanding painter, particularly when one compares this letter with two other letters of recommendation, which Clovio had written not long before. The first of these was for Federico Zuccaro (c.1540-1609), on September 5 1566, when he urged the cardinal to secure his services for the decoration of Palazzo Farnese in Caprarola after his brother's death⁵; the second was written for Bartholomeus Spranger, on September 21 1569⁶. There are some similarities between the letter for Domenicos and these earlier ones, but there are also noteworthy differences. In the letters for Zuccaro and Spranger, Clovio mentioned the artists themselves only halfway through, while in El Greco's letter he focused on the arrival of the painter straightway, and devoted the entire letter to him. This may be interpreted as a singular sign of approval and favour. And yet he failed to mention anything about the Cretan's prospective patrons, as he had in Federico's case⁷. He also avoided expressing any personal feelings, in contrast to his affectionate recommendation of Spranger to the cardinal ('io lo raccomando et per l'affettione')⁸; and said nothing of the Greek artist's character ('virtù'), which he had mentioned in relation to Federico and Spranger⁹. This may indicate that he knew little, or nothing at all, about the Cretan's character. Instead, the miniaturist stressed El Greco's talent,

⁴ Ronchini, 'Giulio Clovio', p. 270, document vii.

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 269, document v: "M.r Tadeo Pittore passò di questa vita martedì notte non con poco dolor mio, maxime essendo cusi gran valentomo come era, oltra che era pieno di ogni bontà, talmente che qui non trova eguale a lui, fora del suo fratello, il quale a me pare di maggior aspettatione assai: et ancora lui è simile; oltra la virtù, è da bene, quanto sia possibile. So che V.S. ha di bisogno di tal persona, e cusi non ve la lassate scappare da le mani, perchè mi pare che molto è stato ricercato dal Cardi.le di Ferrara...".

⁶ Pérez de Tudela, 'Documenti inediti su Giulio Clovio al servizio della famiglia Farnese', p. 298, note 63: "...Io non ho havuto l.ra di V.S. Ill.ma di 21 se non hoggi et subito ho dato ordine ad ubedirla et Bartolomeo istesso sarà il portator della risposta il quale viene volentieri a servir V.S. Ill.ma all quale io lo raccomando et per l'affettione che io gli porto et perchè merita per la sue virtù, et per la sua modestia".

⁷ Ronchini, 'Giulio Clovio', p. 269, document v: "...perché mi pare che molto è stato ricercato dal Cardi.le di Ferrara...".

⁸ Pérez de Tudela, 'Documenti inediti su Giulio Clovio al servizio della famiglia Farnese', p. 298, note 63: "...io lo raccomando et per l'affettione che io gli porto et perchè merita per la sue virtù, et per la sua modestia".

⁹ Clovio mentioned both Zuccaro's and Spranger's virtues; see above notes 5, 8.

and informed the cardinal that the artistic community of Rome had responded positively to his extraordinary work. Who exactly he was referring to is unclear, but there were many influential artists in the city at the time, including Girolamo Siciolante, Federico Zuccaro, Giorgio Vasari, Giovanni de' Vecchi, Scipione Pulzone and others¹⁰. Thus, the first three lines of the letter indicate that Clovio, apparently in keeping with other Roman artists, was overwhelmingly positive in his evaluation of El Greco, and of his self-portrait in particular.

While we have no evidence of Domenicos' skill as a portraitist prior to his arrival in Rome, it is striking that he chose this field to demonstrate his talent. Perhaps this was not the first time he had turned his gaze toward the mirror in search of a subject with which he could experiment. Back in Venice, the painter would have had ample opportunity to study the evolution of portraiture through the examples of Titian, whose authority in the field was absolute by the 1540s; but also through portraits by Tintoretto, who produced images of extreme simplicity and vividness around the same time. Domenicos may well have sought to emulate Titian's focus on the sitter's psychological complexity in his self-portrait¹¹, but the very fact that he used himself as a subject to further his reputation in Rome suggests that he was following more in the footsteps of Tintoretto¹². In 1998, Maurizio Marini even argued that the *Portrait of a Young Man* listed in Fulvio Orsini's inventory might be the self-portrait alluded to by Clovio¹³, but despite the imaginative force of such a hypothesis, it is not supported by any documentary evidence.

¹⁰ A similar event has been depicted by Federico Zuccaro in a series of drawings about the early life of his brother, *Taddeo Decorating the Façade of Palazzo Mattei*, where Michelangelo, Daniele da Volterra, Girolamo Siciolante, Giorgio Vasari and Francesco Salviati admire the young Taddeo decorating the façade of the Palazzo Mattei, *Taddeo and Federico Zuccaro: Artists-Brothers in Renaissance Rome*, exh. cat., ed. J. Brooks, The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, 2007, p. 34, cat. no 19.

¹¹ L. Freedman, *Titian's Portraits Through Aretino's Lens*, University Park, 1995, p. 149; C. Hope, *Titian*, London, 1980, pp. 77-78, 125; J. Fletcher, 'Titian as a Painter of Portraits', in *Tiziano*, exh. cat., ed. M. Falomir, Madrid, 2003, pp. 320-326.

¹² Nichols, *Tintoretto: Tradition and Identity*, pp. 19, 21-22. Tintoretto's *Self-Portraits* in the Philadelphia Museum of Art (c.1546-1548) and in the Victoria & Albert Museum (c.1546-1548) represent a highly self-conscious man who is turning fearlessly to engage the viewer's gaze. Álvarez Lopera underlined the similarities between El Greco's and Tintoretto's portraits. He compared *Tintoretto's Portrait of a Twenty-two Year Old Young Man* in the Barber Institute of Fine Arts of Birmingham with the *Portrait of a Gentleman* by El Greco (formerly in the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, now in a private collection, Milan); J. Álvarez Lopera, 'Portrait of a Venetian Senator', in *El Greco in Italy and the Italian art*, p. 453. For Tintoretto, see P. Rossi, *Jacopo Tintoretto: I Ritratti*, Milan, 1974, reprinted in *Tintoretto: L'Opera completa*, Milan, 1990, vol. I, no 86.

¹³ M. Marini, 'El Greco, 'Creta gli diede la vita e i pennelli, Toledo una patria migliore dove cominciare a ottenere, con la morte, l'eternità'', in *El Greco: Identità e trasformazione*, Italian ed., 1999, p. 136: "...Orsini tra gli altri quadri che lascia al cardinale Odoardo Farnese, elenca un 'quadretto

While reputation was an important factor in enabling access to rich patrons, Domenicos needed an influential person to recommend him to Cardinal Farnese. As we have seen, this person was Giulio Clovio, who had already acted as artistic advisor to Cardinal Farnese, recommending both Zuccaro and Spranger, who consequently participated in the decoration of the Farnese Palace at Caprarola¹⁴. Thanks to Clovio, Spranger had been a guest for a short time at the Cancelleria, and was close to the cardinal, who had given him a place at his table and treated him like any other member of his *famiglia*¹⁵. Farnese's advisors played a pivotal role in presenting artists, providing them with literary support regarding iconography, supervising the progress of commissions, and coordinating the talents of the painters with the demands of the patron. Although Clovio did not devise or supervise iconographic programmes for Cardinal Farnese, the cardinal trusted his opinion and respected him so much that he allowed him to live with him in the Palazzo della Cancelleria¹⁶.

In the late 1560s, however, Clovio was not working on any major commission¹⁷, and may well have been out of favour. According to Vasari, Clovio kept himself busy by producing, among other pieces, his miniatures of *Christ*

corniciato di noce e oro col ritratto di un giovane di beretta rossa di mano del med[esimo –il 'sopradetto Greco']', che potrebbe essere l' incognito *Autoritratto*".

¹⁴ For Spranger's participation in November 1569 see L. Partridge, 'The Sala d'Ercole in the Villa Farnese at Caprarola: Part I', *The Art Bulletin*, 53, 1971, p. 475: "Indeed, one landscape –*Hercules Captures Cerberus*– may be by Spranger, in my opinion"; D. DeGrazia, *Bertoia, Mirola and the Farnese Court*, Bologna, 1991, pp. 48, 65, note 108; *Fiamminghi a Roma, 1508-1608: Artisti dei Paesi Bassi e del Principato di Liegi a Roma durante il Rinascimento*, exh. cat., ed. N. Dacos & B. Meijer, Brussels-Rome, 1995, p. 271.

¹⁵ K. Van Mander, *Le vite degli illustri pittori fiamminghi, olandesi e tedeschi*, Italian transl. R. De Mambro Santos, Rome, 2000, pp. 294-295, fol. 270v; Pérez de Tudela, 'Documenti inediti su Giulio Clovio al servizio della famiglia Farnese', p. 298, note 60, where the author draws attention to the fact that Spranger painted for Cardinal Farnese a small oil painting *St. Jerome in the Wilderness*, now in Museo di Capodimonte in Naples, which Clovio presented to the cardinal. Interestingly, there is a payment record that attests that the cardinal paid twenty-five ducats to Clovio for Spranger's work. Spranger remained in close contact with Clovio during his sojourn in Rome between 1567 and 1575. The *Conversion of St. Paul* in the Pinacoteca Ambrosiana, which bears the signatures of both artists, 'Don Julio Clovio Inv. Bartol Sprangers pinxit' can be seen as important evidence of Spranger's close relationship with Clovio, who, in turn, cared enough for him to introduce him to Cardinal Farnese; *Fiamminghi a Roma, 1508-1608*, p. 271.

¹⁶ Cardinal Farnese became vice-chancellor ('vicecancelliere') of the Church in 1535 and remained in this office until his death in 1589. It was probably in the Cancelleria that Clovio died on January 3, 1578, as Golub has convincingly argued. Clovio's death was registered in the books of San Lorenzo in Damaso, the church inside the Cancelleria and not in the parochial church of Santa Caterina della Rota where Palazzo Farnese belonged; I. Golub, 'Nuove Fonti su Giulio Clovio', *Paragone*, 359-361, 1980, pp. 125-127; for the opposite view see, Robertson, *'Il Gran Cardinale'*, p. 35: "Clovio eventually died in Palazzo Farnese, aged almost 100, on 3 January 1578".

¹⁷ M. Giononi-Visani & U. Gamulin, *Giorgio Giulio Clovio: Miniaturist of the Renaissance*, London, 1993, p. 72, where it is stated that "Mirella Levi D'Ancona places three miniatures from the Wildenstein collection in this period: *Holy Family with an Armed Figure*, a *Holy Family with Saint Elisabeth* and *David and Goliath*". It is not certain if these works were commissioned and if they were, who the patron was, since Clovio's latest period is largely uncharted.

Instructing the Apostles (Public Library, New York) and the *Last Judgment* (Public Library, New York)¹⁸. This lack of direct patronage may be the reason why the miniaturist approached Juan de Verzosa (1523-1574) in 1567; perhaps he hoped that the archivist and secretary to the Spanish ambassador in Rome would help him to gain royal favour¹⁹. Soon, however, he was employed again by Cardinal Farnese, who asked him, on August 8 1570, to produce a small painting for Lady Geronima, the sister-in-law of the Spanish ambassador, Juan de Zúñiga²⁰, who at the time was taking part in the negotiations with Pius V to set up the Holy League. Perhaps by recommending an exceptional artist like Domenicos a few months later, Clovio was seeking to build on his standing with the cardinal.

How Domenicos came to know Clovio in the first place, however, is far from clear. Clare Robertson has suggested that it was either Titian himself, or a member of the Grimani family who introduced them, since both Cardinal Domenico Grimani and his nephew and heir, Marino (d. 1546), were patrons of Clovio²¹. As regards Titian's candidacy there is one objection: why did Titian use Clovio as an intermediary, when he could have contacted the cardinal himself? It seems that the aged painter knew Alessandro Farnese well enough to seek favours, as he did when he asked the cardinal's help in the pursuit of the benefice of the Abbazia di S. Pietro in Colle for his son Pomponio²². Hoping that Cardinal Farnese would act in favour of his son, Titian sent an engraving after the *Trinity* painted for Charles V and a *Penitent*

¹⁸ Vasari, *Vite*, vol. VII, p. 568; M. Levi D'Ancona, 'Illuminations by Clovio Lost and Found', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, xxxvii, 1950, pp. 66-72; for the unfinished Towneley Lectionary (New York Public Library), L. Armstrong, (review), *The Burlington Magazine*, 140, 1998, p. 626.

¹⁹ Brown, 'El Greco and Toledo', in *El Greco of Toledo*, p. 91; Luis Requesens acted as Spanish ambassador in Rome from 1563 until 1568, when he was succeeded by Juan de Zúñiga, who arrived in Rome late in 1568 and stayed until 1574 in a palazzo rented from the Sforza off the Piazza Navona; Dandele, *Spanish Rome: 1500-1700*, pp. 127, 128. Clovio may have had the chance to meet Verzosa in 1550s through Agustín, who was associated with a group of learned Italians and Spanish in Rome, including Fulvio Orsini and Pedro Chacón; J.P. Wickersham Crawford, 'Inedited letters of Fulvio Orsini to Antonio Agustín', *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, xxviii, 1913, p. 578.

²⁰ Golub, 'Nuove Fonti su Giulio Clovio', pp. 123-124; Lady Jerónima de Esterlich y Gralla was the wife of Luis de Requesens, Juan de Zúñiga's brother; Pérez de Tudela, 'Documenti inediti su Giulio Clovio al servizio della famiglia Farnese', p. 300.

²¹ C. Robertson, 'El Greco and Roman Mannerism', in *El Greco in Italy and Italian Art*, pp. 397-403, esp. p. 398. Also, J.W. Bradley, *The Life and Works of Giorgio Giulio Clovio Miniaturist: 1495-1578*, London, 1891, pp. 25-26; M. Perry, 'Cardinal Domenico Grimani's Legacy of Ancient Art to Venice', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, xli, 1978, pp. 215-244; E. Calvillo, 'Romanità and Grazia: Giulio Clovio's Pauline Frontispieces for Marino Grimani', *The Art Bulletin*, lxxxii, 2000, pp. 280-297, with older bibliography.

²² Crowe & Cavalcaselle, *Titian*, vol. II, p. 376, (Titian's letter to Cardinal Farnese dated May 17 1567); Robertson, *Il Gran Cardinale*, pp. 70, 74.

Magdalene in 1567 (Museo e Gallerie Nazionali di Capodimonte, Naples)²³. So if Titian did act as a liaison between Domenicos and Cardinal Farnese, it seems strange that he would write to Giulio Clovio, and not directly to the cardinal. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Titian was perfectly capable of writing in person to important men, as he had in his letter to Philip II of 1567, when he had introduced a ‘very promising young man, my disciple’²⁴. Similar doubts arise when one considers a member of the Grimani family as the person who had introduced Domenicos to Clovio. For one thing, both Domenico and Marino Grimani had died long before 1570, and the family palace was now inhabited by Marino’s brother, Giovanni, Patriarch of Aquileia²⁵. Giovanni is the only plausible candidate out of the Grimani clan, since Marco, admiral of the papal army, had died in 1544, and Vettore, ‘procuratore’ of San Marco, died in 1558²⁶. However, if Giovanni Grimani had wanted to introduce Domenicos to Cardinal Farnese, he could easily have written to the cardinal himself, as dictated by the ecclesiastical office of Patriarch and the prestige of his family’s name²⁷, rather than seeking the intervention of Clovio.

It is my contention that we need to look elsewhere to discover the middleman, or perhaps the middlemen, who introduced Domenicos to Clovio. In particular, I think we can find the most likely candidates among the Greek men of letters associated with the Farnese household, especially those who also had links to Venetian scholarly circles. One possibility is Antonios Eparchos (1491-c.1571), a Greek scholar and old acquaintance of the Farnese entourage, who was in Venice during the summer of

²³ *I Farnese: Arte e collezionismo*, pp. 217-219; P. Fortini Brown, ‘Where the Money Flows: Art Patronage in Sixteenth-Century Venice’, in *Titian, Tintoretto Veronese: Rivals in Renaissance Venice*, exh. cat., ed. F. Ilchman, Boston, 2009, p. 56. In 1567, Titian also sent to Cardinal Farnese a now lost *St. Peter Martyr*, which the painter probably intended to give to the recently elected Pius V through Alessandro Farnese; *I Farnese: Arte e collezionismo*, p. 217.

²⁴ For the letter see ch. 2, note 6.

²⁵ M. Perry, ‘A Renaissance Showplace of Art: The Palazzo Grimani at Santa Maria Formosa’, *Apollo*, cxiii, 1981, pp. 215-221.

²⁶ Penny, *National Gallery Catalogues. The Sixteenth Century Italian Paintings: Venice 1540-1600*, vol. II, p. 72.

²⁷ P. Paschini, ‘Il mecenatismo artistico del patriarca Giovanni Grimani’, in *Studi in onore di Aristide Calderini e Roberto Paribeni*, Milan, 1956, vol. III, pp. 851-862, where it is mentioned that in the *Avvertimenti* of 1577, Francesco Peranda wrote to Monsig. Annibele di Capua that Patriarch Grimani was one of the most respected prelates in Venice: “Fra i Prelati della nazione, il Patriarcha Grimani è il primo et più stimato di tutti gli altri, così per età et dignità sua, come perchè ha gran parentado et grandi amici et é il più liberale et splendido di nessun altro”. For the Grimani case, see P. J. Laven, ‘The Causa Grimani and Its Political Overtones’, *Journal of Religious History*, iv, 1967, pp. 184-205.

1567²⁸ and again from April until November of 1568²⁹, when he probably met Domenicos³⁰. Moving between Italy and Greece, Eparchos had established strong connections with the Cardinals Cervini, Farnese and Sirleto, for whom he often found Greek manuscripts. In fact, Eparchos had a close relationship with Alessandro Farnese and his family, dating back to 1540, when he came to the Farnese Palace with a letter of introduction from Cardinal Pietro Bembo (1470-1547)³¹. Eparchos' links to Alessandro are further confirmed by a letter to the cardinal of 1544, in which he expressed his wish to write the history of the Farnese family, and of Alessandro in particular³². The Greek scholar was moreover no stranger to providing recommendations to patrons in Rome. In May 1542, for example, he had introduced Sextus, friar of the Dominican church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo in Venice, to Cardinal Marcello Cervini; while a few months later, in September 1542, he introduced the Franciscan Bishop Dionisio Zannetini, known as il Grechetto, to the same cardinal, pleading with him to intervene with the pope to allow Zannetini to stay in a Roman cloister³³.

While Eparchos had certainly met Giulio Clovio in the Farnese household in the 1540s³⁴, he was probably better acquainted with Mattheo Devaris³⁵, as they both came

²⁸ A letter Eparchos sent to Cardinal Marcantonio da Mula concerning the sale of some manuscripts informs us of his movements; E. Giotopoulou-Sisilianou, «Αντώνιος ο Έπαρχος: ένας Κερκυραίος ουμανιστής του ΙΣΤ΄ αιώνα», Ph.D. thesis, Athens, 1978, p. 63.

²⁹ L. Dorez, 'Antoine Eparque: Recherches sur le commerce des MSS. Grecs en Italie au XVIe siècle', *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire*, xiii, 1893, letter 50, (July 1568), pp. 353-354; letter 51, (August 1568), p. 355; letter 52, (December 1569), p. 356. In April 1568, Eparchos sent from Venice a letter to the librarian of Duke Cosimo of Medici, Baldini, and in November of the same year he sent two more letters to the scholar Marcantonio Gadaldino; Giotopoulou-Sisilianou, *Αντώνιος ο Έπαρχος*, p. 64.

³⁰ Domenicos' presence in Venice is mentioned in an order sent by the Duke of Crete, dated August 18 1568, in response to a request by Georgios Sideris that certain drawings, which had been given by Domenicos to Manolis Dacypri, be sent to him, see introduction, note 2.

³¹ Legrand, *Bibliographie Hellénique*, vol. II, pp. 367-368. In Bembo's letter there were hints that Eparchos was receiving financial aid from Pope Paul III before 1540; Giotopoulou-Sisilianou, «Αντώνιος ο Έπαρχος», p. 38, note 2. Eparchos, who probably met Pope Paul III in 1539 in Ancona, presented and offered him a written account of the Turkish occupation in Greece (1538-1539), (*ibid*, p. 171); later, Eparchos dedicated one more work to Paul III, a long poem that lamented the disaster of Greece (Venice, 1544).

³² Giotopoulou-Sisilianou, «Αντώνιος ο Έπαρχος», p. 168. In a letter to Ludovico Beccadelli dated from February 1565, Eparchos expressed the wish to publish some works that he had already written, especially one concerning the Farnese family, (*ibid*, p. 168; letter 7, p. 222): "Son anche per metter in stampa alquante mie cosete, dove intravien anche el nome del Illustrissimo Farnese...".

³³ Dorez, 'Antoine Eparque', letter 2, p. 295; letter 3, p. 296; Giotopoulou-Sisilianou, «Αντώνιος ο Έπαρχος», p. 70.

³⁴ Bradley, *The Life and Works of Giorgio Giulio Clovio Miniaturist: 1495-1578*, pp. 147-148.

³⁵ Evidence that Eparchos and Devaris shared acquaintances is provided by the fact that in the 1540s Eparchos had tried to set up a Greek press in Venice with Devaris' old school friend, Nicholaos Sophianos; Giotopoulou-Sisilianou, «Αντώνιος ο Έπαρχος», p. 74. For Sophianos see Fanelli, 'Il Ginnasio greco di Leone X a Roma', *Studi romani*, ix, 1961, p. 391; E. Layton, *The Sixteenth Century*

from Corfu. If Eparchos did write on Domenicos' behalf, he may have written to Devaris, who was still a member of the Farnese *famiglia* in 1570, rather than to the cardinal directly. While Eparchos had enjoyed some privileges in the prime of his professional life in 1540s, including meeting and associating with influential men, in mid-1560s he encountered serious financial problems, losing both his prestigious clientele and his influence on papal circles. The winter of 1566 represented the nadir of his career, and coincided with a dramatic change in papal policy toward manuscript trading³⁶. During the summer of the same year (July-September 1566) Eparchos sent letters to Cardinals Sirleto and Farnese as well as to Fulvio Orsini in Greek, pleading with them to intervene with Pius V to sanction a big commission of fifty rare manuscripts transferred from Greece for his predecessor, Pius IV³⁷. As the new pope was adamant, Eparchos' career came to a sudden end, and his failure to revoke the pope's decision must have greatly depressed him. The fact that Alessandro Farnese had been unwilling or unable to offer help may have coloured his professional and personal relationship with the cardinal. Perhaps he felt that if he wrote to the cardinal about a promising painter, his compatriot Domenicos Theotocopoulos, Farnese would again turn a deaf ear. And El Greco deserved a positive response; a Greek fellow scholar in the Farnese household would be no doubt more inclined to help in this case.

Mattheos Devaris would indeed have made a good go-between with Clovio, whom he admired greatly, having composed Greek epigrams praising the miniaturist's talents as a painter³⁸. And while there is no evidence that it was Eparchos who provided the initial introduction, I would venture to say that the Greek

Greek Book in Italy: Printers and Publishers for the Greek World, Venice, 1994, pp. 460-472; Legrand, *Bibliographie Hellénique*, vol. I, pp. clxxxvii-cxciv; R. Ridolfi, 'La biblioteca del cardinale Niccolò Ridolfi (1501-1550): Nuovo contributo di notizie e di documenti', *La bibliofilia*, xxxi, 1929, pp. 173-193, esp. p. 183; A. Diller, *The Tradition of the Minor Greek Geographers*, Lancaster PA., 1952, pp. 15-17.

³⁶ G. Guerrieri, 'Il mecenatismo dei Farnese', *Archivio storico per le provincie parmensi*, iv, 1945-1948, pp. 88-90.

³⁷ Legrand, *Bibliographie Hellénique*, vol. II, letter to Cardinal Sirleto, pp. 367-368; letter to Cardinal Farnese, pp. 370-371; letter to Fulvio Orsini, pp. 372-373. In the letter to Alessandro Farnese in August 1566 Eparchos wrote that he was already seventy-three years old, (*ibid*, pp. 370-371); three years later, on December 3, 1569, in a letter he sent from Venice to Sirleto in Rome he wrote that he was seventy-seven years old; Dorez, 'Antoine Eparque', letter 52, p. 356.

³⁸ Ph.K. Bouboulidou, «Τα επιγράμματα του Ματθαίου Δεβαρή», *Επιστημονική Επετηρίς της Φιλοσοφικής Σχολής του Παν/μιου Αθηνών*, period II, 12, 1961-1962, pp. 387-411, esp. p. 393. Devaris' epigrams, which amounted to 50, were dedicated to, among others, his friend Nicholas Sophianos, Cardinal Niccolò Ridolfi, Pope Paul III, Cardinals Alessandro and Ranuccio Farnese, and other members of this circle; F. Benoit, 'Farnesiana II. La maison du cardinal Farnèse en 1554', *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire*, xl, 1923, pp. 200-201. It is also possible that Devaris had already formed a small library by that time just like his friend George Corinth; D. Pingree, 'The Library of George, Count of Corinth', *Studia Codicologica*, ed. K. Tren, Berlin, 1977, pp. 351-362.

connection provides a better understanding of the cultural atmosphere in the Farnese household, and that the personal and professional contacts between Eparchos, Devaris and Clovio bolster the case for such a route into Farnese circles.

However he came to know Domenicos, the miniaturist was clearly impressed by the Cretan's talent and urged the cardinal to act immediately in order to secure his services. Clovio's beseeching tone is expressed with the use of the verbs 'pray and beseech' ('prego et supplico'), the primary words of petitioning and patronage supplication, which signal the arrival of the moment of request. As with Zuccaro and Spranger, Clovio addressed his letter to the cardinal himself, but in this case he formally sought favour from his influential patron, recognizing that Domenicos' worthiness was an urgent matter in Rome's highly competitive environment. And yet the miniaturist asked merely for a room without other financial obligations on the cardinal's behalf ('senza spesa altra del vivere'), and for a short time ('per qualche poco tempo'), until the painter found better lodgings ('accomodare meglio'). The request for 'qualche poco tempo' sounds unusual, particularly when his previous two recommendations led Zuccaro and Spranger to be engaged on the decoration of the Farnese Palace at Caprarola. But so does the phrase 'senza spesa altra del vivere'. That Clovio asked merely for a room without further demands, such as a food supplement³⁹, raises the question of whether the Cretan was searching for other patrons and commissions in the meantime, attempting to secure for himself another form of income, because food, like housing, was expensive in Rome⁴⁰. In some ways, Domenicos' case paralleled that of Petros Devaris, Mattheos' nephew, who was given accommodation but not a permanent place at the Farnese household, and whose uncle pleaded with Alessandro Farnese in 1554 to give him something to do, no matter how trivial it was, in order to cover his expenses⁴¹.

The type of accommodation requested for Domenicos seems to clarify his initial working status in the Farnese household. Clovio's appeal for a room leads us to infer that the painter did not enter the Farnese entourage as a salaried member of the cardinal's *famiglia*, or as an artist hired on a fixed-term contract for a particular commission, but rather as a talented painter whose skills may have been useful to the

³⁹ R.E. Spear, 'Rome: Setting the Stage', in *Painting for Profit: The Economic Lives of Seventeenth-Century Italian Painters*, New Haven & London, 2010, p. 38.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 39-40.

⁴¹ F. Benoit, 'Farnesiana I. La bibliothèque grecque du cardinal Farnèse', *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire*, xl, 1923, pp. 189-190, letter vii.

cardinal in the future. Yet the timing could not have been better, for Bertoja left the cardinal's palace almost the same month that Domenicos was allowed access, in November 1570⁴². The Cretan's stay at Palazzo Farnese, which seems to have been temporary and conditional in nature in the beginning, lasted almost two years. This length of time seems to signify that after Domenicos had managed to get into one of the most distinguished courts in Rome, he dedicated himself to proving his talent and establishing a reputation. Should he succeed in gaining work from the cardinal, he might hope to exchange his precarious position, which was subject to the shifting moods of his benefactor, for a fully-paid career under his protection. Alongside security, the status of a member of the Farnese court endowed a painter with more prestige than money.

Having settled in the Farnese Palace, Domenicos slowly acquainted himself with the protagonists of the cardinal's household. It is possible that Clovio subsequently arranged for Domenicos to have an audience with the cardinal, as he had done with Bartholomeus Spranger⁴³. The Greek painter may also have presented a painting to the cardinal, just as Spranger had painted a small oil picture for him. It is almost certain that Domenicos met the cardinal at some point, and although we do not know if the meeting went well, we do know that the Greek painter later visited the Farnese Palace at Caprarola⁴⁴. There, he had the opportunity to admire the interior of the palace, which overflowed with frescoes of histories, allegories and grotesques. He would also have had the chance to study the work of two colleagues, who were in the cardinal's service: Spranger, who probably painted the landscapes in the Sala d' Ercole in autumn 1569⁴⁵, and Bertoja, who completed the Sala d' Ercole and worked on the Stanze dei Giudizi, dei Sogni and della Penitenza (1569-1570)⁴⁶, where he managed to combine successfully the Roman *gravitas* with the Emilian *grazia*⁴⁷.

Clovio's endorsement of Domenicos was the first and most important step in the painter's career in Rome. Unlike Fulvio, Clovio was not distinguished for his profound knowledge of the antique, but he did enjoy the esteem of the habitués of the

⁴² DeGrazia, *Bertoja, Mirola and the Farnese Court*, p. 30.

⁴³ See above note 15.

⁴⁴ Domenicos wrote incorrectly on the margin of Vasari's *Vite* that the vault of the Camera dell' Aurora does not have stars, Marias, *El Greco y el arte de su tiempo*, Greek transl., p. 99: "no hay estrellas".

⁴⁵ See above note 14.

⁴⁶ L.W. Partridge, 'Sala d' Ercole in the Villa Farnese at Caprarola: Part II', *The Art Bulletin*, liv, 1972, p. 61.

⁴⁷ L. Partridge, 'Discourse of Asceticism in Bertoja's Room of Penitence in the Villa Farnese at Caprarola', *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*, 40, 1995, pp. 145-174, esp. p. 158.

Farnese Palace and his company was sought after by artists and connoisseurs. Despite Farnese's recent friction with Clovio's other protégé, Federico Zuccaro, and Federico's subsequent departure from the Caprarola project in 1569, Clovio's judgment was clearly still trusted. His letter to Alessandro Farnese recommending Domenicos managed to intrigue the cardinal, and eventually permission was granted for the Cretan to enter the cardinal's entourage. Perhaps as repayment to the old miniaturist for his intervention, Domenicos depicted Clovio not only in an independent portrait listed in Fulvio's inventory, but also in the lower right-hand side of the *Purification of the Temple* (c.1570-1575, The Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minnesota). This painting, which in our view is a key work from this period, will be examined in some detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: The Artistic Milieu of Rome: Friendships, Rivalries and Theoretical Positions

Domenicos quickly understood that personal connections played a dominant role in an artist's career in Rome and that one important patron could lead to another. After the favourable impression made by the self-portrait that 'had astonished all the painters of Rome', and his entrée into the Farnese household, the Greek painter was ready to secure a more lasting employment and forge a career in the city. Given the large number of paintings by his hand listed in the Orsini and Farnese inventories, he seems to have been channelling his energies into attracting the cardinal's attention, probably hoping that his personal connections with important members of his household, including Giulio Clovio, who remained well-disposed towards the artist, would bring in commissions. Evidence of his continuing association with Clovio - at least through the early part of his stay at Palazzo Farnese - may be found in certain comments by his contemporary, Pirro Ligorio. These were made in a treatise on the nobility of the arts, entitled *Trattato di Pyrrho Ligorio patritio napolitano cittadino romano, di alcune cose appartenente alla nobiltà delle antiche arti, et massimamente dela pittura, dela scoltura, et dell' architettura*. The following passage illustrates several key points and for this reason deserves to be quoted at some length:

'This man [Giulio Clovio], having allied himself with a clumsy foreigner, makes endless insolent remarks with him, and they make things as difficult as they can, so that worthy men suffer, to the extent that they would rather destroy every man than let them do good things without him and his companion who has come to Rome from overseas [Domenicos Theotocopoulos]. One of these men, despite being a detractor of every virtue, wants to be thought of as the wisest of men and the finest expert in drawing [Giulio Clovio], and so presumptuous is he, that he doesn't understand that he has no idea how to draw even a line, nor how to teach others. While the other one, because of his faith in his friend, and his ambition to show that he is doing something, not to mention his own shortcomings – his desire for magnificence and for a reputation as a gentleman – interests himself in the

uncultivated absurdities of the most stupid mechanics you can find; and of course now he has been exposed as ignorant and unfamiliar with every excellent activity¹.

Although the treatise was written around 1580, when Ligorio was already living at the Ferrara court, it has been accepted that it refers to much earlier events². It is also generally thought that the man whom Ligorio describes in the passage in question as having ‘come to Rome from overseas’ (‘venuto a Roma oltramarino’) is Domenicos Theotocopoulos, and the man who wants to be thought of as an expert in drawing (‘lo miglior conoscitore di disegno’) is Giulio Clovio³. Thus Ligorio’s comments provide an unusually suggestive insight into two interesting issues that I wish to explore in some depth in the present chapter, namely the intensively competitive nature of the artistic environment of Rome at the time; and the varied intellectual interests that were occupying the newly arrived Greek. It seems that Domenicos was positioning himself as an intellectual, an effort that appears to have provoked the antagonism of Ligorio, who had worked hard to be accepted as an educated man.

Rivalries

Knowledge of classical languages for the reading of literary sources was still seen as an important prerequisite in the Farnese coterie. According to an inventory that Fulvio compiled in 1567, when he became librarian of the Palazzo Farnese in Via Giulia, the ‘libreria grande’ of the palace contained 233 Greek manuscripts⁴. As we have seen, the Farnese palace moreover offered accommodation to Greek scholars,

¹ In an attempt to recast El Greco’s artistic formation, I have put forward a more detailed analysis of the passage by Pirro Ligorio than has been done before. With this, I intend to achieve a more nuanced picture of the Cretan’s sojourn in Rome. The translation is my own; the passage is cited in Coffin, ‘Pirro Ligorio on the Nobility of the Arts’, p. 203: “Questo, accordatosi con un’ goffo forestiero, usa infinite insolenze con quello, e fanno tanti intoppi quanto possano per far morire gli uomini da bene di disascio, talché per loro desiderio farebbe che fosse ogni uomo distrutto più tosto che avessi lume di far bene senza esso e senza il suo compagno venuto a Roma oltramarino. L’ uno di essi vuole, con esser detrattore d’ ogni gentilezza, [esser] tenuto et stimato il primo sapiente, lo miglior conoscitore di disegno, e si prosume tanto di sé istesso, che non conosce, ch’ egli non seppe mai tirar una linea, non che la sappi dare ad’ intendere per regola di ammaestrare. L’ altro, con la fede che ha a costui e per ambizione di parere di far qualche cosa, e per li vezzi suoi, per la magnificenza, per la riputazione che si reca di signore, si fa curioso delle goffagini delli più sciocchi meccanici che si trovano, e certo avemo veduto si è scoperto ignorante et alieno d’ogni cosa eccellente”. The treatise has been published in *Scritti d’ arte del cinquecento. VI. L’ artista*, ed. P. Barocchi, Torino, vol. II, 1979, pp. 1412-1470, esp. pp. 1433-1434.

² Coffin, ‘Pirro Ligorio on the Nobility of the Arts’, p. 203.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 203; Brown, ‘El Greco and Toledo’, in *El Greco of Toledo*, p. 81; F. Marías, *Greco: Biographie d’ un peintre extravagant*, Paris, 1997, p. 93.

⁴ Formentin, ‘Uno Scriptorium a Palazzo Farnese?’, p. 77.

such as Mattheos and Petros Devaris, scribes including Giovanni Onorio da Maglie (1535-1563)⁵, and ‘letterati’, such as Benedetto Egio da Spoleto (d. 1567), not to mention Orsini himself, all of whom were prized for their prowess in Greek. As we have already suggested, Domenicos’ knowledge of the Greek language would have served him well in such an environment, since this was seen as a rarity among artists. His linguistic skills, together with a growing interest in textual and non-textual evidence of the ancient world, must have riled Ligorio, who could generally expect to feel superior to other artists in his knowledge of the ancient world. We can assume that Domenicos’ knowledge of antiquity was laid years earlier, in Crete, which like Rome was dotted with the remains of the ancient world. Yet his learning was greatly refined under Fulvio’s influence, as we shall discuss at length in the next chapter. Thus by pairing the identity of Titian’s disciple with that of the cultivated artist Domenicos aspired to distinguish himself among the flocks of talented artists that were attracted to the city. One could therefore imagine Ligorio’s displeasure that a fairly unknown artist from ‘overseas’ moved so easily, as we shall see, among Roman antiquarians of the calibre of Fulvio Orsini. The pique in his tone is obvious and it may explain why the Neapolitan dismissed the Greek in his treatise as ‘ignorant and unfamiliar with every excellent activity’ (‘ignorante et alieno d’ogni cosa eccellente’)⁶. On the other hand, Ligorio’s contempt suggests that as far as learning was concerned, he took the Cretan seriously as a rival.

As the study of classical antiquity was associated with virtuous and knowledgeable men, learning and social status went hand in hand. In 1557, Agustín, who well remembered that Ligorio arrived in Rome as an artisan painter, wrote to Onofrio Panvinio that ‘as for the acrimony of Messer Pyrrho it is necessary to suffer the imperfections of companions who are not gentlemen (‘galanthuomini’) nor in all things what they are reputed to be’⁷. When Ligorio eventually became one of the leading authorities on ancient Roman art, his social status changed, and in 1560 he was made an honorary citizen of Rome. This was an important honour in the sixteenth century, and one that he soon began to allude to, together with his ‘patrician’ origins⁸, in works such as the tract on the nobility of the arts, which was titled ‘Treatise of

⁵ Giovanni Onorio da Maglie copied manuscripts for both Paul III and Fulvio Orsini, De Nolhac *La Bibliothèque*, pp. 352, 354, nos 16, 47, 48; Formentin, ‘Uno Scriptorium a Palazzo Farnese?’, p. 86.

⁶ Coffin, ‘Pirro Ligorio on the Nobility of the Arts’, p. 203.

⁷ I follow the translation of Coffin, *Pirro Ligorio: The Renaissance Artist, Architect, and Antiquarian*, p. 20.

⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 45-46.

Pirro Ligorio, Neapolitan patrician and Roman citizen' ('Trattato di Pyrrho Ligorio patritio napolitano cittadino romano'). Like Ligorio, it seems that Domenicos may have been eager to introduce himself as a man with refined tastes and interests, in order to present himself as a gentleman ('signore')⁹.

Unsurprisingly, Ligorio's criticism of Domenicos parallels his assault on Clovio. He wrote that the miniaturist 'wants to be thought of as the wisest of men' ('vuole...[esser] tenuto et stimato il primo sapiente'), and as 'the finest expert in drawing' ('lo miglior conoscitore di disegno')¹⁰. In Ligorio's opinion, however, Clovio 'has no idea how to draw even a line, nor how to teach others' ('egli non seppe mai tirar una linea, non che la sappi dare ad' intendere per regola di ammaestrare')¹¹. Earlier in the passage Ligorio accused Clovio of being insolent, of letting worthy men – apparently like himself – suffer hardships ('per far morire gli uomini da bene di disascio'), and of 'being a detractor of every virtue' ('esser detrattore d' ogni gentilezza')¹². He also described Clovio as a shrewdly competitive man, who together with his companion make things difficult for others¹³. His comments appear to lay bare a bitter rivalry between himself and Clovio, which seems to have been nourished by ambition, envy and pressure for commissions. The phraseology employed by Ligorio to describe Clovio's behaviour is reminiscent of the language he had previously used for Fra Guglielmo della Porta (c.1495-1577), who was responsible for Ligorio's brief incarceration in the Tor di Nona in August 1565. Writing to Cardinal Farnese on September 4, 1565 to thank him for his intervention in the matter, Ligorio accused Della Porta of being 'an enemy of good men' ('nimico degli huomini da bene') and 'envious of every honour, persecutor of every relationship and of all friendship'¹⁴. Like Della Porta, Clovio seems to have been on the Neapolitan's black list. It is worth recalling, however, in Ligorio's defence that in the late 1560s he lost his employment at the papal court and was in financial difficulties. Apparently, he had fallen foul of the ever-changing papal courts and politics of late sixteenth-century Rome, where artists did not hesitate to elbow aside their rivals in order to work on

⁹ Coffin, 'Pirro Ligorio on the Nobility of the Arts', p. 203, note 48.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 203, note 48.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 203, note 48.

¹² *Ibid*, p. 203, note 48.

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 203, note 48: "fanno tanti intoppi quanto possano per far morire gli uomini da bene di disascio".

¹⁴ A. Ronchini, 'Una lettera inedita di Pirro Ligorio', *Atti e memorie delle RR. Deputazioni di storia patria per le provincie modenesi e parmensi*, iii, 1865, pp. 109-114.

projects that would enhance their reputation. Domenicos must also have been aware of this climate, when he wrote sarcastically in his annotations on Vasari's *Vite* many years later, how good the competition between artists was ('que buena era la competencia')¹⁵, implying how fiercely artists in Rome promoted their careers.

Quite apart from their personal dislike, Ligorio and Clovio, who had probably known each other since 1543 as they were both members of Annibale Caro's circle¹⁶, also had different ideas about art. Clovio, for example, was particularly fond of Netherlandish art, judging from the number of pictures and drawings he owned – about seven – by Flemish artists, including Pieter Brueghel (c.1525-1569), Adriano Fiammingo, and Jan Soens (c.1547-1610/11)¹⁷. Indeed, he even collaborated with Pieter Brueghel on a miniature depicting the Tower of Babel, when the latter visited Rome in 1553¹⁸, and he showed a particular liking for Spranger. Ligorio, on the other hand, seems to have kept his distance from Netherlandish art, and even his contacts with cultivated men from the North, such as the Flemish cartographer Abraham Ortelius (1527-1598), who visited Ferrara in 1577, were largely based on a mutual love for antiquity and a passion for collecting medals¹⁹. Unlike Clovio, who was personally well-disposed towards Federico Zuccaro, Ligorio seems to have had his objections to the Zuccari brothers, which probably dated back to 1561, when Pius IV decided to complete the decoration of Sala Regia²⁰. Although there were certain

¹⁵ Marías, *El Greco y el arte de su tiempo*, Greek transl., p. 109; El Greco wrote this comment when Vasari remarked that Michelangelo had advised Fra Guglielmo della Porta to change the position of Paul III's tomb in St. Peter's, but that Fra Guglielmo, thinking that Michelangelo had done it out of envy, was filled with hatred against him.

¹⁶ Coffin, *Pirro Ligorio: The Renaissance Artist, Architect, and Antiquarian*, p. 8.

¹⁷ A. Bertolotti, 'Don Giulio Clovio, principe dei miniatori', *Notizie e documenti inediti*, Modena, 1882, pp. 11-17; J. Schlosser, 'Two Portrait Miniatures from Castle Ambras', *The Burlington Magazine*, 41, 1922, pp. 194-198, esp. p. 198. For the influence of Northern art on Clovio see W. Smith, 'Giulio Clovio and the "maniera di figure piccole"', *The Art Bulletin*, 46, 1964, pp. 395-401, esp. p. 397.

¹⁸ C. DeTolnay, 'A new miniature by Pieter Bruegel the Elder', *The Burlington Magazine*, 120, 1978, pp. 393-397; M. Perry, 'A new miniature by Pieter Bruegel the Elder?', *The Burlington Magazine*, 121, 1979, p. 38; C. DeTolnay, 'A new miniature by Pieter Bruegel the Elder?', *The Burlington Magazine*, 121, 1979, p. 444; C. DeTolnay, 'Further miniatures by Pieter Bruegel the Elder', *The Burlington Magazine*, 122, 1980, pp. 616-623. Also, N.W. Canedy, 'Pieter Bruegel or Giulio Clovio?', *The Burlington Magazine*, 123, 1981, p. 35. Clovio's association with another important Flemish artist, Cornelis Cort (1533-1578), who arrived in Rome from Venice in 1566, can be seen as further evidence for Clovio's special taste for Flemish art. The humanist Domenicus Lampsonius from Liege must have introduced the engraver to Clovio, according to a letter dated on December 9 1570; see Vasari, *Vite*, vol. III, pp. 386-387; U. DaComo, *Girolamo Muziano, 1528-1592: note e documenti*, Bergamo, 1930, pp. 180-183.

¹⁹ Coffin, *Pirro Ligorio: The Renaissance Artist, Architect, and Antiquarian*, p. 130.

²⁰ Cardinals Marcantonio da Mula (known as Amulio) and Alessandro Farnese were responsible for the completion of the project, but Amulio, following Ligorio's advice, commissioned various artists, including Giuseppe Porta, Siciolante da Sermoneta, and Livio Agresti, leaving out Taddeo Zuccaro.

artistic and professional affinities between Ligorio and the Zuccari, including their common references to Raphael and the antique, as well as their early start as façade painters²¹, it was the different artistic ideals that these artists cultivated that inevitably coloured Ligorio's response to them. As an accomplished antiquarian, Ligorio was systematically cultivating the ideal of a learned man, while Federico and Taddeo, like Clovio, promoted the ideal of 'the self-taught artist' who managed to overcome personal and professional hardships²².

Perhaps more importantly, Clovio and Ligorio did not share the same ideas about Michelangelo, whose achievements continued to loom large over Roman art. Clovio was a great admirer of the Florentine master, and had made copies of the *Ganymede* and the *Flagellation* (The Royal Library, Windsor Castle)²³. Conversely, Ligorio seems to have seriously doubted Michelangelo's superiority. Although he was forced to acknowledge the Florentine's mastery of drawing and sculpture²⁴, he was highly critical of his accomplishments as an architect²⁵. Ligorio detested Michelangelo's designs for the Porta Pia²⁶, and he planned to change Michelangelo's solutions for St. Peter's when he succeeded him as papal architect in 1564²⁷. Ligorio's disagreement with Michelangelo reflects his personal taste in architecture, which was coloured by his understanding of the rules expounded by ancient authorities on architecture, chiefly Vitruvius. Unlike Michelangelo, Ligorio admired Vitruvius and he praised the construction methods of the ancients. As in other cases, the theoretical

Only due to Taddeo's insistence and manoeuvres did the painter manage to paint a small part in it, Acidini Luchinat, *Taddeo e Federico Zuccari*, vol. I, p. 148; *Taddeo and Federico Zuccaro: Artist-Brothers in Renaissance Rome*, ed. J. Brooks, Los Angeles, 2008, p. 69, note 67, where a different explanation for Taddeo's exclusion is given: "Taddeo was no doubt excluded because Cardinal Farnese, who had just given him the enormous commission to decorate Caprarola, wanted him to get on with it".

²¹ J.A. Gere, 'Some Early Drawings by Pirro Ligorio', *Master Drawings*, ix, 1971, p. 242; J.S. Weisz, 'Pittura e Misericordia: The Oratory of S. Giovanni Decollato in Rome', Ph.D. thesis, Harvard Uni., Cambridge Mass., 1982, p. 103.

²² See for example, Federico's drawings depicting 'The Early Life of Taddeo', *Taddeo and Federico Zuccaro: Artist-Brothers in Renaissance Rome*, pp. 8-35, nos 1-20.

²³ Joannides, *Michelangelo and His Influence: Drawings from Windsor Castle*, pp. 72-74, no 15; pp. 120-122, no 34.

²⁴ Coffin, 'Pirro Ligorio on the Nobility of the Arts', p. 205: "In painting the pleasing Raphael of Urbino, the drawing and sculpture of Michelangelo, always holding the ancients before our eyes and in our memory as works most worthy and most like the beauty and quality of generative nature".

²⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 193, 195, 201.

²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 198.

²⁷ Coffin, *Pirro Ligorio: The Renaissance Artist, Architect, and Antiquarian*, p. 69; H.A. Millon & C.H. Smyth, 'Michelangelo and St. Peter's –I: Notes on a Plan of the Attic as Originally Built on the South Hemicycle', *The Burlington Magazine*, 111, 1969, pp. 484-500, esp. pp. 494-496; M. Hirst, 'A Note on Michelangelo and the Attic of St. Peter's', *The Burlington Magazine*, 116, 1974, pp. 662-665; H.A. Millon & C.H. Smyth, 'A Design by Michelangelo for a City Gate: Further Notes on the Lille Sketch', *The Burlington Magazine*, 117, 1975, pp. 162-166.

disagreements between artists coincide and resonate with a strong personal dislike. For example, Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574) reported in his *Lives* that Michelangelo told him in 1559 that many - probably including Ligorio - accused him of becoming senile²⁸. Perhaps Michelangelo was annoyed with Ligorio for having become so important in the artistic circles of Rome at the time. Vasari, who arrived in Rome in February 1566 seeking favour at Pius V's court²⁹, soon made an enemy of Ligorio, and it is likely that the ill feeling between the two was instrumental in Ligorio's dismissal from papal employ, particularly when Vasari realised that the Neapolitan had no intention of carrying out Michelangelo's designs for St. Peter's³⁰. Siding with Clovio in his support for Michelangelo, Vasari praised the miniaturist by calling him 'a little and new Michelangelo'³¹, while he left Ligorio's biography out of his *Vite* altogether³².

As mentioned above, Ligorio's antipathy towards Clovio clearly affected the Neapolitan's feelings for Domenicos, who does not emerge unscathed from his criticism. At this juncture it is worth pondering at what point Ligorio could have met Domenicos and become aware of his close relationship with Clovio. We know that Ligorio was still in the city on December 4, 1568³³, but that he spent the whole of 1569 in Ferrara executing various projects for Alfonso II d'Este. He visited Rome briefly in the spring of 1570³⁴, and again late in 1572, when the Duke decided to send his courtiers, including Ligorio, to Rome; Alfonso himself arrived in Rome on

²⁸ Vasari, *Vite*, vol. VII, p. 245: "Era entrato a servire Paulo quarto Pirro Ligorio architetto e sopra alla fabbrica di San Piero, e di nuovo travagliava Michelangelo, ed andavano dicendo che egli era rimbambito"; Coffin, *Pirro Ligorio: The Renaissance Artist, Architect, and Antiquarian*, pp. 68, 193 note 107.

²⁹ Ph.P. Fehl, 'Vasari's 'Extirpation of the Huguenots': The Challenge of Pity and Fear', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, lxxxiv, 1974, pp. 257-284; Vasari received commissions for the church of Santa Croce di Bosco Marengo in 1569, for three chapels in the Vatican in 1570, and for work at the Sala Regia.

³⁰ Vasari, *Vite*, vol. VII, pp. 266-267; Vasari informs us that on March 1, 1567 Ligorio had just been dismissed from St. Peter's "but not before he has made I don't know how many mistakes"; I follow the translation of Coffin, *Pirro Ligorio: The Renaissance Artist, Architect, and Antiquarian*, p. 69. Similarly, Nanni di Baccio Bigio, who succeeded the Neapolitan as papal architect, would not have received much support from Vasari as Bigio had been hostile to Michelangelo; Coffin, *Pirro Ligorio: The Renaissance Artist, Architect, and Antiquarian*, p. 74. Bigio had been Francesco Salviati's close friend; for Vasari's difficult relationship with Salviati, see, for example, Rubin, *Giorgio Vasari: Art and History*, pp. 28-29.

³¹ Vasari, *Vite*, vol. VII, pp. 564, 569; vol. VI, p. 16, in the life of Giovanni Antonio Lappoli, Vasari wrote about Clovio: "...miniature eccellentissimo veramente..."; Smith, 'Giulio Clovio and the "maniera di figure piccole"', p. 395.

³² Coffin, *Pirro Ligorio: The Renaissance Artist, Architect, and Antiquarian*, p. 68.

³³ *Ibid*, p. 81.

³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 110.

January 19, 1573³⁵. Therefore Ligorio must have met the Cretan painter either during his short visit to Rome in the spring of 1570, or in 1572³⁶. While Clovio's letter of introduction for Domenicos was written in November 1570, his allusion to 'all the painters in Rome' having been impressed by his self-portrait suggests that the Cretan had been in the city already some time, so it is possible that he met Ligorio in the spring of that year, perhaps through mutual contacts around Matteo Devaris and Giulio Clovio. It is equally likely, however, that Ligorio met Theotocopoulos in 1572, because, even though the Cretan had been forced to leave the Palazzo Farnese in July or August of that year³⁷, it appears evident that he was still associated with members of the Farnese court after his dismissal.

Domenicos, Ligorio and the Currency of Architecture

Despite their brief acquaintance, Ligorio was vitriolic in his description of the Cretan years later. As we have seen, he criticised him for trusting Clovio ('con la fede che ha a costui')³⁸, and chided him for aspiring to prove himself ('per ambizione di parere di far qualche cosa'), for his desire of being held in high esteem ('per la riputazione che si reca di signore'), and for his ignorance of every excellent activity ('ignorante et alieno d'ogni cosa eccelente')³⁹. However, more important for us, Domenicos is said to have been in contact with certain 'stupid mechanics' ('sciocchi meccanici'). As will be discussed, this phrase is noteworthy for its allusion to Cretan's particular interest in architecture. That he had taken lessons from the example of Palladio while in Venice is borne out by elements of the altarpiece that he designed for Santo Domingo el Antiguo in 1577-1579 (fig. 8)⁴⁰; and remarks made by his son, Jorge Manuel, suggest that Domenicos would later also contribute his own

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 116-117.

³⁶ Coffin, 'Pirro Ligorio on the Nobility of Arts', p. 203, where Coffin refers to a possible meeting between Ligorio and El Greco when Ligorio "returned to Rome for a visit at the beginning of 1573 and at that time undoubtedly visited his old friends in the Farnese entourage, such as Fulvio Orsini".

³⁷ Pérez de Tudela, 'Una carta inédita de El Greco al Cardenal Alessandro Farnesio', pp. 267-268; A. Pérez de Tudela, 'A proposito di una lettera inedita di El Greco al Cardinale Alessandro Farnese', *Aurea Parma*, lxxxv, 2001, pp. 175-188.

³⁸ Coffin, 'Pirro Ligorio on the Nobility of the Arts', p. 203, note 48.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 203, note 48.

⁴⁰ The prominent Corinthian columns and the framed panels with the portraits of saints over the niches in S. Domingo recall Palladian architectural elements used in the façade of S. Francesco della Vigna in Venice. Moreover, in S. Domingo, El Greco appears to have combined Palladian elements with an earlier format of altarpieces used by the Vivarini workshop in Venice around 1480, in which the two central panels of the *Assumption* and of the *Dead Christ* above it are flanked by representations of saints in two registers, two saints in half length and two standing saints below; see P. Humfrey, 'A Dead Christ with Angels by Alvise Vivarini', *The Burlington Magazine*, 135, 1993, pp. 627-629.

treatise on the subject. When he applied for the post of first architect to the royal palace of Toledo, Jorge Manuel said that he had helped his father on a book of architecture, which Domenicos had been working on for many years⁴¹. Domenicos' lost treatise on architecture and his architectural projects in Toledo, including his later lateral altarpieces in the Tavera Hospital (1608-1614), would have been unthinkable without his Roman sojourn and his acquaintance with the Roman 'cognoscenti'.

If architecture provided one of the incentives for his going to Rome in the first place, as we have suggested in chapter 2, his residence there provided the opportunity for a serious study of the subject. From the beginning of the sixteenth century, architects and artists eagerly sketched architectural details, ruins and facades of buildings in order not only to supplement their knowledge of the development of Roman architecture, but also to understand the rules of 'il buon stile antico'. Literary notables, such as Annibale Caro, Claudio Tolomei and Angelo Colocci, displayed a similar, keen interest in architecture and Roman architectural practice through academies, private meetings and discussions. As Fulvio entertained a closer contact with Domenicos, he could have told him about the activities of the celebrated Accademia della Virtù in 1541, and how architects as diverse as Baldassare Peruzzi and Giacomo Vignola studied and measured the ruins of Rome with the help of Marcus Vitruvius Pollio's ten-book treatise *De architectura*. He may also have recounted how his mentor, Angelo Colocci together with Marco Fabio Calvo and Raphael had intended to publish Vitruvius in the vernacular with Raphael's illustrations, and how Colocci wrote important annotations on Fra Giovanni Giocondo's first illustrated edition of Vitruvius of 1511⁴². When Fulvio inherited part of Colocci's library, it is likely that he became the owner of this copy of Fra Giocondo's edition⁴³; the same copy probably passed to the Vatican Library, when Fulvio decided to bequeath part of his library to the pope.

One of the foremost authorities on architecture at the time was of course Ligorio, who systematically studied the Roman ruins and rose to become architect-in-

⁴¹ Mariás & Bustamante, *Las ideas artísticas de el Greco*, p. 19: "un insigne libro que dejó hecho de arquitectura, dedicate a S.M., sobre Vitruvio, en que por muchos años trabajó continuamente"; F. Mariás, 'Handwritten annotations in 'I dieci libri dell' Architettura' ', in *Palladio*, exh. cat., ed. G. Beltramini & H. Burns, Vincenza/London/Barcelona/Madrid, 2008-2010, p. 226.

⁴² I.D. Rowland, 'Raphael, Angelo Colocci, and the Genesis of the Architectural Orders', in *Sixteenth-Century Italian Art*, ed. M.W. Cole, Oxford, 2006, p. 519 (the article was first published in *The Art Bulletin*, 76, 1994, pp. 81-104); unlike earlier editions of Vitruvius, Fra Giocondo's edition included 136 woodcut illustrations that helped the reader to understand the ancient text.

⁴³ De Nolhac, *La Bibliothèque*, p. 383, no 22, note 22.

chief of St. Peter's. Domenicos would certainly have been well aware of Ligorio's achievements both as an antiquarian and as an architect, just as he would have known of the praise lavished upon the Neapolitan by his friend, Fulvio. We know, for example, from Domenicos' annotations on Vasari's *Vite*, that the Cretan had visited the Carafa Chapel in the church of S. Maria sopra Minerva, which housed the sculptural monument to Paul IV. The prestigious commission was given to Ligorio, even though several artists, including Michelangelo's pupil, Giacomo del Duca and Annibale Caro's protégé, Giovanni Antonio Dosio, must have submitted designs⁴⁴. This tomb, which anticipated baroque art in many ways, was designed by Ligorio in 1566 for Pius V, although it was executed by Giacomo Cassignuola and others⁴⁵. While Vasari had praised the polychromatic effect of the sculpture, describing the monument as 'marvellous' ('maravigliosa')⁴⁶, Domenicos strongly criticised Ligorio's use of coloured marbles to imitate painting, saying that 'they [Ligorio & Cassignuola] degrade sculpture without imitating anything nice'⁴⁷. In addition to their different views on architecture, this last comment seems to have masked a difficult relationship between El Greco and Ligorio.

Ligorio's description of the men with whom Domenicos was in contact, as 'mechanics' and not 'architects', is worth noting. Ligorio clearly disapproved of 'every mason and every surveyor [who] wishes to be an architect'⁴⁸, and reserved the title of 'architect' for those who – like himself – were not 'plebeian', and who had acquired their name laboriously along the rough path of knowledge. Who these 'sciocchi meccanici' might have been is anyone's guess, but what can be said with some confidence is that these men were Ligorio's rivals. One possible candidate may have been Giovanni Antonio Dosio (1533-1610), who was a man of strong antiquarian bent, well-versed in architecture, and who had worked as head architect on the papal fortifications at Anagni⁴⁹. Ligorio had every reason to be hostile to Dosio, not only because their approach to antiquity and Roman architecture was quite

⁴⁴ C. Valone, 'Paul IV, Guglielmo della Porta and the Rebuilding of San Silvestro al Quirinale', *Master Drawings*, xv, 1977, pp. 243-255, esp. p. 254.

⁴⁵ Coffin, *Pirro Ligorio: The Renaissance Artist, Architect, and Antiquarian*, pp. 74-76.

⁴⁶ Vasari, *Vite*, vol. VII, p. 551.

⁴⁷ Marías, *El Greco y el arte de su tiempo*, Greek transl., p. 138: "que ensucian la escultura y no imitan nada bueno".

⁴⁸ Coffin, 'Pirro Ligorio on the Nobility of the Arts', p. 193.

⁴⁹ C. Valone, 'Giovanni Antonio Dosio: The Roman Years', *The Art Bulletin*, 58, 1976, pp. 528-541, esp. p. 532, where the author mentions that Dosio bore the title 'architetto della fabrica' with particular pride as "he set down the title after his name on every possible occasion", (*ibid*, p. 532).

different, but also because Dosio had been closely associated with Ligorio's enemy, Guglielmo della Porta⁵⁰. A second candidate, who may be hiding behind the phrase 'sciocchi meccanici', is Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola, who had worked under Ligorio's command in July 1564, before succeeding him as chief architect of St. Peter's⁵¹. Vignola enjoyed a wide reputation for his *Regole de' cinque ordini* (Venice, 1562), where he established a canon of proportions for the five orders based on the authority of the ancients. Vignola soon became Cardinal Farnese's favourite architect, and he was hired to design the Palazzo Farnese at Caprarola, and *Il Gesù* in Rome, a church for which Ligorio had also submitted a (now lost) design⁵². Vignola even left his stamp on Palazzo Farnese in Rome, as can be seen in the southern wing of the palace, not to mention the great mantelpiece with the caryatids, the pattern of tiles on the floor of the main hall, the stucco frieze in Ranuccio's bedroom, and the monumental marble table in the Sala de' Filosofi, next to the Carracci gallery⁵³. That he was highly regarded in artistic circles in Rome at that time can be seen from the insertion of his portrait as San Giacomo Maggiore in the chapel of the Palazzo Farnese at Carparola by Federico Zuccaro in 1566-1567⁵⁴. Ligorio, therefore, had every reason to envy him.

If indeed Ligorio implied either Dosio, or Vignola, or both, with the word 'mechanics', it remains to ponder why he called them uncultivated ('sciocchi'). As has been discussed, the study of antiquity and the knowledge derived from Roman architecture and its monuments were of the utmost importance for Ligorio. His reconstructions on paper of ancient buildings and temples were based both on direct observation of the ruins and careful study of various other sources, including coins and inscriptions⁵⁵. Having moved in the same circle as the members of the Accademia

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, p. 533.

⁵¹ Coffin, *Pirro Ligorio: The Renaissance Artist, Architect, and Antiquarian*, p. 68; W. Lotz, 'Architecture in the Later 16th Century', *College Art Journal*, 17, 1958, pp. 129-139, esp. pp.131-132; M.J. Lewine, 'Nanni, Vignola, and S. Martino degli Svizzeri in Rome', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 28, 1969, pp. 26-40, esp. p. 36.

⁵² Coffin, *Pirro Ligorio: The Renaissance Artist, Architect, and Antiquarian*, p. 80.

⁵³ O. Raggio, 'The Farnese Table: A Rediscovered Work by Vignola', *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, 18, 1960, pp. 213-231, esp. pp. 222-224.

⁵⁴ Acidini Luchinat, *Taddeo e Federico Zuccaro*, vol. II, pp. 16, 19, fig. 27; Robertson, *Il Gran Cardinale*, p. 110, where she argues that during 1567 the winter apartment was decorated with grotesques "that pick up figures used in the decoration elsewhere, such as the figure of Vignola from the chapel...".

⁵⁵ H. Burns, 'Pirro Ligorio's Reconstruction of Ancient Rome: The Antiquae Urbis Imago of 1561', in *Pirro Ligorio, Artist and Antiquarian*, ed. R.W. Gaston, Milan, 1988, pp. 33-34.

della Virtù⁵⁶, Ligorio was also well versed in Vitruvius. He thus fully embraced the Vitruvian model of the knowledgeable architect⁵⁷, demanding that an architect be a ‘wise and experienced man’⁵⁸, who ‘should learn philosophy, musical method, symmetry, arithmetic, mathematics, astronomy, history, morality, medicine, geography, cosmography, topography, proportion, perspective, sculpture and painting’⁵⁹. This suggests that, for Ligorio, as for Vitruvius before him, what separated a skilful craftsman from an architect was his excellence in learning. The idea of the importance of learning for the architect, who was not seen merely as a carpenter or a mason but as a cultivated man⁶⁰, was in harmony with the views of certain ‘letterati’, such as the Vitruvian commentator Daniele Barbaro, who was on friendly terms with both Ligorio and his patron, Cardinal Ippolito d’Este⁶¹. As mentioned earlier, when Barbaro visited Rome with Andrea Palladio in 1554, he viewed the ancient monuments of the city in the company of Ligorio⁶².

The Neapolitan belonged to the milieu of architects who were related to Bramante and his school: to Raphael, whom he admired, to Baldassare Peruzzi (1481-1536) and Antonio da Sangallo the Younger (1484-1546), who had completed numerous surveys of ancient monuments, and Sallustio Peruzzi (1511/12-1572/73), with whom he had worked⁶³. On the other hand, practising architects, such as Michelangelo and Vignola, apparently scorned Ligorio’s antiquarian knowledge⁶⁴. Vignola, for example, was not reputed to have been a man of wide learning, or to have had high intellectual pursuits⁶⁵. Both his treatises *Regole de’ cinque ordini* and

⁵⁶ A close friend of Ligorio was the Modenese poet Francesco Maria Molza (d. 1544), member of the Academy, Coffin, *Pirro Ligorio: The Renaissance Artist, Architect, and Antiquarian*, p. 8.

⁵⁷ Vitruvius, *De architectura*, Greek transl., P. Lefas, Athens, 2000, vol. I-II, esp. vol. I, Book I.1.3-5, pp. 37-39, where in the Praefatio Vitruvius stresses that the architect should be a learned man; he should be well versed in draughtsmanship, geometry, history, philosophy, music, medicine, law and astronomy; M. Masterson, ‘Status, Pay, and Pleasure in the ‘De Architectura’ of Vitruvius’, *The American Journal of Philology*, 125, 2004, pp. 392-394.

⁵⁸ Coffin, ‘Pirro Ligorio on the Nobility of the Arts’, p. 204, note 54: “...l’architetto habbi da essere huomo sciente et pratico”.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p. 204, note 54: “...philosophia, metodo di musica, semetria, eremetica, matematica, astronomia, historia, moralità, medicina, geografia, cosmographia, topographica, analogia, prospetiuua, sculpire et dipingere...”.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p. 204, note 54.

⁶¹ Burns, ‘Pirro Ligorio’s Reconstruction of Ancient Rome’, in *Pirro Ligorio, Artist and Antiquarian*, p. 60, note 131.

⁶² Coffin, *Pirro Ligorio: The Renaissance Artist, Architect, and Antiquarian*, p. 18.

⁶³ *Ibid*, p. 6.

⁶⁴ For Michelangelo’s approach to antiquity, C. Brothers, *Michelangelo, Drawing, and the Invention of Architecture*, New Haven & London, 2008, pp. 45-83.

⁶⁵ J. Coolidge, ‘Vignola’s Character and Achievement’, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 9, 1950, pp. 10-14, esp. p.12.

Le due regole della prospettiva pratica, which was published posthumously in 1583, contained practical solutions to the problem of orders and perspective respectively. While Vitruvius' *De architectura* gained increasing authority within sixteenth-century architectural theory, practising architects regarded the ancient author with a good degree of scepticism, due to the discrepancies they had found between many of Vitruvius' recommendations and the real measurements taken from ruins.

It appears that Domenicos shared at least some of this scepticism when it came to Vitruvius. His previous experience as a post-Byzantine painter helped him to avoid exaggerating the achievements of the ancients, and to perceive art as a continuing process. Domenicos wrote in his annotations on Vitruvius that 'I do not have such a preference for the past of my country as Vitruvius has for the past of his', and that 'it becomes apparent that the arts advance and flourish as time goes by...'⁶⁶. Domenicos furthermore pointed out that the Greek word 'architect' originally meant 'carpenter' ('carpintero')⁶⁷, censuring in this way all those who, like Ligorio, adhered slavishly to the Vitruvian model of architect. In his annotations on the ancient treatise, Domenicos wrote that all that was needed to be a good architect was the careful inspection of modern and ancient buildings, the study of the human body and, above all, the practice of drawing, which was the most important requirement⁶⁸. In this, he closely followed Michelangelo, who drew incessantly, attributing to drawing a significance reminiscent of the ancient painter Apelles who, according to Pliny, never let a day pass without drawing⁶⁹.

⁶⁶ F. Marías & A. Bustamante, 'Le Greco et sa théorie de l'architecture', *Revue de l'arte*, 46, 1979, pp. 31-39, reprinted in *El Greco: Works in Spain*, ed. N. Hadjinicolaou, Rethymno, 1990, pp. 360-364; Marías & Bustamante, *Las ideas artísticas*, pp. 156-157: "...no tengo tanta inclinación por lo mío como la que [muestra] Vitruvio en el capítulo anterior por su patria...las artes aumentan y crecen por medio del tiempo..."; D. Theotokopoulos, 'Annotations on Vitruvius's De architectura', Greek transl., *Tetradia Efhinis*, 31, Athens, 1991, pp. 130-131.

⁶⁷ Marías & Bustamante, *Las ideas artísticas*, p. 77: "...el nombre griego no significa más que carpintero y con mucha razón, puesto que el que sabe cortar la madera cortará la piedra"; Theotokopoulos, 'Annotations on Vitruvius' De architectura', pp. 98-99.

⁶⁸ Marías & A. Bustamante, 'Le Greco et sa théorie de l'architecture', p. 37: "Si come las Artes que son zirca labrar con la lingua e primero es ynsenar sus conzetos así larchitettura a der ser con el dibujo et por el mismo camino con ver et ymitar cosas buenas se aprende e non fa come algunos que aprenderlos de coro se azen señores dello de que non solo non saven poner parte nissima en essecucion ma tampoco en connossicala en hobra ajena"; Theotokopoulos, 'Annotations on Vitruvius' De architectura', pp. 102, 130; Marías, 'Handwritten annotations in 'I dieci libri dell' Architettura', in *Palladio*, pp. 226-227.

⁶⁹ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, Engl. transl. H. Rackham, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge Mass., [1952], reprint. 2003, Book XXXV, xxxvi, 84, p. 323.

Domenicos appears to have assigned to architecture a more practical dimension than Ligorio, approaching Serlio, Vignola and Dosio⁷⁰ on this point. Like them, his understanding of Vitruvian principles came more from an architect's point of view than a scholar's. As with painting, Domenicos seems to have been guided around the great variety of ancient buildings by his own 'iudicio' and his experienced eye, rather than by fixed rules. He appears to have disagreed with the type of education that Vitruvius regarded as essential to the training of the architect, namely exercises with rule and compass based on mathematics and Euclidean theory⁷¹. In the 1590s, he wrote in the margins of Vitruvius that beauty does not depend on mathematical canons and that the man who possesses good judgment could imitate nature and improve upon it⁷². The all-important faculty of 'iudicio' entailed an intellectual capacity, based on understanding, practice and experience⁷³. Indeed, El Greco recounted in his comments on Vitruvius that when Clovio asked Michelangelo about the importance of measurements, the Florentine had replied that those who were concerned with them were deplorable⁷⁴. Like Michelangelo who knew better than anyone how to throw away the compasses of the hand in order to rely on the compasses of the eyes, Domenicos thought that the strict rules in architecture should be based on experience ('experiencia') and on the 'giudizio dell' occhio'. In this way, the Cretan related the 'giudizio dell' occhio' with the 'giudizio dell' architetto', the judiciousness of the architect, which was expounded by Daniele Barbaro in his edition of Vitruvius.

As I have argued, Domenicos appears to have been deeply interested in architecture from the outset of his Italian sojourn, and not only as stage scenery⁷⁵.

⁷⁰ C. Valone, 'Giovanni Antonio Dosio and His Patrons', Ph.D. thesis, Northwestern Uni., 1972, pp. 109-114, 116.

⁷¹ Vitruvius, *De architectura*, Book III, 1.1-3.13, pp. 185-199.

⁷² Marías & Bustamante, 'Le Greco et sa théorie de l'architecture', p. 36; Marías & Bustamante, *Las ideas artísticas*, p. 124: "...la figura de un hombre proporcionado y hermoso no es lo mismo a caballo que a pie, que bueno sería que porque a caballo sube más alto que el nivel de nuestra vista...le andáramos cambiando las proporciones..".

⁷³ Marías & Bustamante, *Las ideas artísticas*, p. 113, where Domenicos stated that the rules of architecture were derived from experience: "...digo yo en la arquitectura hay algunos preceptos forzosos como en otra cualquier facultad, los cuales nacidos de la experiencia..."; Theotokopoulos, 'Annotations on Vitruvius' *De architectura*, p. 111.

⁷⁴ Marías, & Bustamante, 'Le Greco et sa théorie de l'architecture', p. 37: "y por esso los que nela Pintura ano avido algo nunca trataron de medidas –et assi- come contara Don Julio que fu uno de los mayores che y luminato que preguntado a Miguel Anjelo de medidas le dijo que se maravillava del y que todos aquellos que tratavan de medidas gran gofos y desgraziados"; Marías & Bustamante, *Las ideas artísticas*, pp. 237-238.

⁷⁵ For an opposite view see J. Bury, 'El Greco's Books', *The Burlington Magazine*, 129, 1987, pp. 388-391, esp. p. 390: "...so little was he concerned with constructional realities that he could treat Dosio's

According to the inventory of his books, the Cretan would come to possess a great many works on architecture, and surely those of Serlio and Vignola would have been among the nineteen listed in his library at the time of his death⁷⁶. Despite the criticisms levelled against Vitruvius, Domenicos seems to have understood the rules of classical architecture well, and appreciated the achievements of artists, such as Raphael. It seems to me that the different positions on architecture of Ligorio and Domenicos stem from two different approaches to imitation: the imitation of ancient architects, of which Vitruvius was the sole model, represented by Ligorio; and the imitation of canons devised by architects, who attempted to improve, complete and refine Vitruvius' precepts, such as Serlio, Vignola and Michelangelo, followed by Theotocopoulos. Such different positions, not to mention the personal animosity expressed in Ligorio's treatise, would suggest that the Neapolitan was the last person who Domenicos would seek to emulate. And yet, Ligorio's extensive knowledge of antiquity and his many architectural designs and projects made him a paradigm of the well-educated and learned artist. And this was the direction that Domenicos, too, seemed to be heading in.

Aesthetic Ideas and Scholarly Ideals

If Michelangelo continued to exercise the greatest hold on Roman artists, no one was so great an admirer of his than Giulio Clovio. In Domenicos' *Portrait* of the miniaturist (Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte, Naples) (fig. 9) he is shown holding the Farnese Book of Hours in his right hand, and pointing at the figure of God creating the sun and moon with his left, in a deliberate allusion to Michelangelo's depiction of the same scene on the Sistine ceiling. It was probably the high esteem in which Clovio held the Florentine master, and his masterful imitations of Michelangelo's works that prompted Domenicos to place Clovio's portrait next to that of Michelangelo in the lower right-hand corner of the Minneapolis *Purification of the Temple* (fig. 10), one of the most intriguing paintings in Domenicos' oeuvre. As this work deliberately conflated allusions to classical and contemporary models, the following analysis investigates Domenicos' contribution to contemporary debates on

diagram...as if it were an exterior elevation...his attitude to buildings was that not of an architect but of a scenographer".

⁷⁶ De Borja de San Román y Fernández, *El Greco en Toledo*, p. 197: "Diez e nueve libros de arquitetura", in *El Greco: Documents on His Life and Work*, p. 274.

art and his engagement with the circles of humanist Rome. With this painting, I would suggest that El Greco not only intended to answer the question of who the greatest artist of his era was, but he also planned to challenge the supremacy of the artists that he depicted in it.

Larger than the earlier Washington *Purification*, the Minneapolis version (c. 1572) retains all the main figures from his earlier work, including Christ in a central position, the half-naked woman, the children, and the elderly man seated in the foreground, but is now executed with greater confidence and control of colours. The most prominent feature of the picture, however, is the introduction of four portraits of artists, three of which are easily recognisable: Titian, Michelangelo, and Clovio (fig. 11). The fourth portrait remains unidentified⁷⁷. It depicts a man with long hair who gestures with his hand, and demands attention by confronting the spectator with an insistent stare. Although the portrait compositionally belongs to the ‘looking over the shoulder’ type that was popular in Venice around 1500 (see, for instance, Titian’s *Portrait of a Man*, c.1509, The National Gallery, London), the calm and self-confident expression of the sitter links it to Raphael’s portraits. While El Greco’s references to Raphael and his work are less precise than his quotations from Michelangelo, Raphael remained a guiding light for many painters after his death in 1520, and Domenicos was well aware of his achievements as a painter of great ‘istorie’⁷⁸. If the *Purification* retains a Venetian atmosphere, with its rich colours, the insertion of these portraits, and particularly Clovio’s, in the lower right-hand side corner of the painting leads us back to Rome⁷⁹. While the Cretan painted the shoulders and clothes of his sitters with care, his portrait of Michelangelo is much smaller and is placed behind Clovio’s shoulder and Titian’s head. This curious position may convey a personal comment on the Florentine, whose presence seems less important compared to the other three men. Despite his early interest in Buonarroti’s art, as discussed in relation to his drawing of *Day*, Domenicos did not

⁷⁷ See for example, E. Wind, ‘A Self-Portrait of El Greco’, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, iii, 1939-1940, pp. 141-142; Wethey, *El Greco and His School*, vol. II, pp. 68-69.

⁷⁸ In his annotations on Vitruvius El Greco wrote that Raphael was the first artist to give birth to painting; Marias & Bustamante, *Las ideas artisticas*, p. 236: “Rafael de Urbino yl quale fu de los Primeros que dio luz nela Pintura”.

⁷⁹ The provenance of the picture is insecure. It is first mentioned in the collection of the Duke of Buckingham in 1758, and later in the Yarborough collection (1857); E.K. Waterhouse, ‘El Greco’s Italian Period’, *Art Studies*, 1930, p. 86, no 14. In my opinion, the picture must have entered the English collection much earlier, when George Villiers, 1st Duke of Buckingham (1592-1628), bought in haste a large number of Italian pictures with the help of his agent Balthazar Gerbier (1592-1667).

respond unreservedly to what Michelangelo had offered to Italian art. One of the main sticking points was his disagreement with Michelangelo's championing of 'disegno', over 'colorito'. In his annotations on Vasari, Domenicos wrote that Buonarroti did not know how to paint hair, or to imitate human flesh⁸⁰. He also disapproved of Michelangelo's architectural designs for Porta Pia⁸¹, as Ligorio had done before him, and he criticised the Palazzo Farnese in Rome, calling the balcony on the façade of the palace, 'very contemptible' ('harto ruin')⁸². Yet, despite his criticisms, Domenicos continued to study the work of Michelangelo throughout his Italian years⁸³, borrowing selectively and incorporating particular aspects of the Florentine's oeuvre into his compositions. In fact, I would contend that his rivalry with Michelangelo involved a complex interplay of competition and imitation, of contention and admiration.

From the plethora of contemporary artists, Domenicos chose only four to depict. As their presence in the Minneapolis picture has nothing to do with the religious scene, Domenicos appears to have used these bust portraits as a way of adding his voice to the long-discussed issue of who was the greatest artist of the age, the 'new Apelles'. Artists as diverse as Francesco Francia⁸⁴, Mantegna, Raphael, Dürer⁸⁵ and Titian⁸⁶ were often presented as 'modern equivalents' to Apelles⁸⁷, and it is not a coincidence that Federico Zuccaro chose to paint the *Calumny of Apelles* to defend himself against Cardinal Farnese's unfair treatment, as we shall discuss later. Each artist in Domenicos' picture seems to have represented a different model-artist, promoting a different artistic identity: Titian was the painter of high repute, social status and wealth; Clovio the experienced court artist; Michelangelo the much-

⁸⁰ Mariás, *El Greco y el arte de su tiempo*, Greek transl., pp. 59-60: "...no sabía Miguel Angel ni hacer cabellos ni cosa que imitase las carnes".

⁸¹ *Ibid*, p. 111.

⁸² *Ibid*, pp. 59, 108.

⁸³ P. Joannides, 'El Greco and Michelangelo', in *El Greco of Crete, Proceedings of the International Symposium*, Iraklion, 1995, pp. 199-214.

⁸⁴ For Francesco Francia, see for example, M. Baxandall & E.H. Gombrich, 'Beroaldus on Francia', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, xxv, 1962, pp. 113-115.

⁸⁵ E. Panofsky, 'Erasmus and the Visual Arts', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, xxxii, 1969, pp. 200-227; A. Smith, 'Dürer and Bellini, Apelles and Protogenes', *The Burlington Magazine*, 114, 1972, pp. 326-329.

⁸⁶ See for example, Freedman, *Titian's Portraits Through Aretino's Lens*, pp. 26ff, 147ff. The citation of the name of Apelles as a rhetorical praise had become a standard commonplace from the fourteenth century onwards; see for example, C.E. King, *Representing Renaissance Art, c.1500-c.1600*, Manchester & New York, 2007, pp. 132-139; C. Ridolfi, *The Life of Titian*, Engl. transl. J. Conaway Bondanella & P. Bondanella, Pennsylvania, 1996, p. 80, where it is cited a poem by Pietro Aretino who refers to Titian as Apelles.

⁸⁷ J. Gage, 'A Locus Classicus of Colour Theory: The Fortunes of Apelles', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, xxxiv, 1981, p. 13; Rubin, *Giorgio Vasari: Art and History*, p. 377.

discussed genius, and Raphael, if it is him, the learned artist. All traditions – Titian and Venice, Michelangelo and Florence, Raphael and Rome, Clovio and the foreign contribution to Italian art – are represented. Openly eclectic, Domenicos appears to be attempting to reconcile opposing approaches to art; and I would suggest that his ideal artist was not limited to one master, but was a composite. Not one, but all of them were the ‘Apelles’ of their age. Thus Domenicos became one of the proponents of imitating many sources, a viewpoint which favoured the autonomy of the artist by suggesting that the imitator would appropriate his models to his own inventive skills. Similar beliefs were also expressed in his annotations on Vitruvius, where, together with Michelangelo, Titian and Raphael, the painter added the names of Tintoretto, Correggio and Parmigianino as the best artists of his time⁸⁸. Interestingly, the same eclectic approach to artistic imitation was voiced by Ligorio, who argued that different elements should be taken from different masters, namely style from Raphael and drawing from both Michelangelo and Polidoro da Caravaggio⁸⁹. Perhaps one can also see an echo of Domenicos’ four portraits in the series of drawings from the 1590s by Federico Zuccaro about the early life of his brother, Taddeo, in which he depicted Michelangelo, Raphael, Polidoro and Taddeo as the Apelles of his age⁹⁰. With these portraits Federico allegedly indicated the artistic influences on Taddeo’s art, but it was more likely that he was expressing his own hierarchy of artistic ideals⁹¹.

As in art, so in letters, well-educated men spoke of the importance of following of classical models, and the ‘imitation’ of other writers. The issue of imitating one or many models still dominated the discussions of humanists in the second half of the

⁸⁸ Mariás & Bustamante, *Las ideas artísticas*, pp. 131-132; Theotokopoulos, ‘Annotations on Vitruvius’ *De architectura*, p. 121.

⁸⁹ Coffin, ‘Pirro Ligorio on the Nobility of the Arts’, p. 205 “...Raphael in style, in drawing Michelangelo and Polidoro...these are our Apelles...”. For Ligorio the imitation of nature meant ‘to represent variety in beauty’ and ‘choose from nature the beautiful’, following in the example of the ancient painter Zeuxis, who selected the best features of five women to paint the ideal one, (*ibid.*, pp. 206-207). In this way, Ligorio echoes Alberti’s ideas, who wrote in his third book *On Painting* that “complete beauties are never found in a single body, but are rare and dispersed in many bodies”; L.B. Alberti, *On Painting*, Engl. transl. J.R. Spencer, New Haven & London, [1956], revised ed. 1966, pp. 92-93, note 8; p. 133, where Alberti’s definition of beauty as “a harmonious whole that nothing can be added, taken away or changed without destroying it...” is also repeated.

⁹⁰ *Taddeo and Federico Zuccaro: Artists-Brothers in Renaissance Rome*, p. 36. The introduction of the ‘four’ artists as paradigms may not have been coincidental; four are the elements (earth, water, fire and wind), the seasons of the year, the temperaments (sanguine, choleric, melancholic, phlegmatic) closely related to the four humours (blood, yellow bile, black bile, phlegm) and four were the cardinal virtues (Prudence, Justice, Temperament, Fortitude). For the four basic virtues, see Cicero, *De Inventione*, Engl. transl. H.M. Hubbell, Loeb Classical Library, Harvard, 1949, Book II, liii, 159, pp. 326-327.

⁹¹ *Taddeo and Federico Zuccaro: Artists-Brothers in Renaissance Rome*, pp. 2-3; Acidini Luchinat, *Taddeo e Federico Zuccari*, vol. II, pp. 225-226, figs. 99, 100, 101, 102.

sixteenth century, and Domenicos was well aware of the insistence on the part of the rhetorically trained scholars of Rome on the revival of classical culture, following in many respects Cicero's authority. It thus comes as no surprise when El Greco alludes to both Cicero's ideal orator ('perfeto horador'), and to the analogy between rhetoric and music in his annotations on Vitruvius⁹², a topic that had been discussed by Cicero in his *De oratore*⁹³. The idea that selective borrowing could lead to greater perfection found its culmination perhaps in the much-repeated anecdote of the painter Zeuxis, who selected the five most beautiful young women of Croton and painted the most attractive features of each, in order to produce an image of Helen that surpassed all living women in beauty⁹⁴. Similarly, Cicero, who narrated the story, claimed that he based his treatise on more than one model, having a larger collection to choose from than Zeuxis⁹⁵. The story expressed the notion that the qualities a painter sought to combine could not 'be found in one person, because in no single case has Nature made everything perfect and finished in every part'⁹⁶. Therefore, an artist should use the best qualities from several prototypes in order to reach perfection, and consequently surpass all previous achievements of his peers. Cicero had already expressed similar ideas in his early *De inventione*, where he had stated that 'if men would choose the most appropriate contributions from many sources...they...would suffer somewhat less from ignorance'⁹⁷. It appears that these ideas were firmly embedded in the rhetorical tradition⁹⁸, given that Quintilian would later suggest that one should 'keep the excellences of a number of authors before our eyes'⁹⁹, while

⁹² Mariás & Bustamante, *Las ideas artisticas*, p. 239: "...quada Arte de natural sibathia es lo que de orta tiene conpuesto et assi se cria junta et agumenta con ello e come nel perfeto horador esta serado lo que tien de la Musica"; Theotokopoulos, 'Annotations on Vitruvius' De architectura', *Tetradia Eftinis*, pp. 127-128.

⁹³ Cicero, *De Oratore*, Book III, lvii, 216, p. 173.

⁹⁴ Cicero, *De Inventione*, Book II, i, 1-3, pp. 166-169; Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings*, Engl. transl. D.R. Shackleton Maily, Loeb Classical Library, Harvard, 2000, III, 7, 3, p. 313; Pliny, Book XXXV, xxxvi, 64, p. 309.

⁹⁵ Cicero, *De inventione*, II, ii, 5, p. 171.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, II, i, 3, p. 169.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, II, ii, 5, p. 171.

⁹⁸ Earlier Philostratus the Elder wrote in his *Imagines* that Aristodemus of Caria "painted in the technique of Eumelus, but with much more charm"; Philostratus, *Imagines*, Engl. transl. A. Fairbanks, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge Mass., [1931], reprint. 2000, Book I, 295, p. 5. Similarly, in the Proemium of his *Imagines*, Philostratus the Younger encouraged artists to emulate each other and to "challenge our predecessor for, if we attain our goal, we shall accomplish something worthwhile"; Philostratus the Younger, *Imagines*, Engl. transl. A. Fairbanks, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge Mass., 1931, 5, 20, p. 283.

⁹⁹ Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, Book X, ii, 26, p. 335.

warning against the dangers of slavish imitation¹⁰⁰. According to Quintilian no single model, either in rhetoric or in art, was entirely perfect and should be imitated. To illustrate his point the author of *Institutio Oratoria* gave the example of Demosthenes, who although he was ‘by far the most perfect of the Greeks’, was occasionally surpassed by others¹⁰¹. As far as painting was concerned, the Roman orator also suggests the imitation of multiple models for visual artists: ‘Protopogenes excelled in accuracy, Pamphilus and Melanthius in method, Antiphilus in facility’, while in sculpture, ‘the work of Callon and Hegesias was stiff...and Myron’s more fluid...Polyclitus had more craftsmanship and grace than the rest’¹⁰², and so forth. The painter should keep all these models in mind.

Re-reading as they did the writings of ancient authors, many Renaissance men of letters defended the idea of imitating many sources, while others, including Pietro Bembo, chose Cicero as the single model for imitation. Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472) recounted the anecdote of Zeuxis in his treatise *On Painting* (Latin 1435/Italian 1436), not only as proof of the importance of imitating many models, but also as proof of the importance of direct study of nature¹⁰³. As Alberti continued to loom large in debates on the visual arts – indeed the first printed edition of his Italian version of *On Painting* only appeared in 1547 - virtually any scholar or artist who talked about Zeuxis and the story of Helen of Troy in the sixteenth century was well aware of Alberti’s point of view. Sixteenth-century scholars, like Onofrio Panvinio and Paolo Giovio, championed the selection of sources and imitation of several models, as did Vasari, Giovio’s protégé. In his *Life* of Raphael, for example, Vasari stressed that Raphael first imitated his tutor Perugino so successfully that their works could not be told apart; then he imitated Leonardo, and finally Michelangelo, even though he could not surpass the nudes of the Florentine¹⁰⁴. More importantly, Fulvio Orsini’s working method, as indicated in his *Imagines et elogia virorum illustrium* and will be analysed in the next chapter, was relied on the study of a great number of different sources, presenting several images of the same man. Given Domenicos’

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, X, ii, 1-5, pp. 323-329.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, X, ii, 24, p. 333.

¹⁰² *Ibid*, Book XII, x, 6-7, p. 285.

¹⁰³ Alberti, *On Painting*, Book III, pp. 93-94. The Florentine Giovanni Francesco Pico della Mirandola (1470-1533) wrote to Pietro Bembo in 1512: ‘I say that one must imitate all good writers, not only one, and not in everything’; R. Goffen, *Renaissance Rivals: Michelangelo, Leonardo, Raphael, Titian*, New Haven & London, 2002, p. 27.

¹⁰⁴ Vasari, *Vite*, vol. IV, p. 373-375.

close connection to Fulvio, it is likely that he would have already encountered the writings of classical authors, such as Philostratus, Cicero and Quintilian, while in Rome. Much of what they said naturally concerned good oratory, but it could apply to art as well.

I have already suggested that the four artist portraits in the Minneapolis *Purification* were not included purely as a eulogistic appraisal. Indeed, it seems to me that El Greco's admiration for these men also involved rivalry, and that he depicted them with the express purpose of comparison, with an aspiration to outdo them. According to Quintilian, surpassing one's model needed 'iudicio', good judgment, because mere imitation of the artistic accomplishments of others was not enough¹⁰⁵. The importance of 'giudizio' for the visual artist was a theme explored by certain artists, including Leonardo, who associated good judgment with understanding and reason, writing that 'the painter who draws by practice and judgment of the eye without the use of reason is like a mirror which copies everything placed in front of it'¹⁰⁶. Similarly, in the *Diálogos em Roma*, a recollection of conversations in Rome in 1538, Francisco de Hollanda asked Michelangelo how one should value art, to which Michelangelo replied that, since painting was 'worthy only of lofty intellects', its value can be set only by those with judgment, because painting 'belongs only to the mind which understands what is good and much there of it is able to attain. And the extreme difference between the aspirations of high and of a low understanding in painting is indeed a tremendous thing'¹⁰⁷. Later, Vasari used the same word 'judgment' and described Raphael as 'a judicious man' ('uomo di grandissimo giudizio')¹⁰⁸, and Sebastiano del Piombo as a man of 'exquisite judgment', ('squisito giudizio'), because he recognized the merits of both Michelangelo and Raphael¹⁰⁹. The notion of judgment was soon supplemented with idea of the 'giudizio dell' occhio', the 'good judgment of the eye' already touched on above, which had been held up by Vasari to imply the artist's skill in creating harmonious compositions without resorting to the aid of compass and measurement¹¹⁰.

¹⁰⁵ Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, Book X, ii, 8-14, pp. 324-329.

¹⁰⁶ *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*, ed. I.A. Richter, Oxford, [1952], 1980, pp. 224-225.

¹⁰⁷ F. De Hollanda, *Diálogos em Roma (1538): Conversations on Art with Michelangelo Buonarroti*, ed. G.D. Folliero-Metz, Heidelberg, 1998, pp. 110-111.

¹⁰⁸ Vasari, *Vite*, vol. IV, p. 375.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*, vol. V, p. 568.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, vol. I, p. 151: "Ma non si debbe usare altra miglior misura che il giudizio dell' occhio"; Marías, 'El Greco's Artistic Thought: From Eyes of the Soul to the Eyes of the Reason', p.170.

El Greco made clear in his notes on Vitruvius that by far the most important instrument of a painter was his eye, which functioned in the same way as the ear for a musician ('la oreja del músico es como el ojo del pintor')¹¹¹. This reference was inspired by the observations of Aristoxenus of Tarentum (354-300 BC), a student of Aristotle, whose name the Cretan mentioned in his notes¹¹². Aristoxenus followed the principles of his teacher concerning the significance of the senses in the reception of knowledge, and claimed that the human ear was the sole arbiter of the correctness of pitches. Agreeing with this fundamental principle, Domenicos defended the role of the eye, implying that measurements were not as important as the experience of vision, through which an artist can know everything¹¹³. It was at this point that he recounted Michelangelo's apparent dismissal of all those who concerned themselves with measurements ('gran gofos y desgraziados')¹¹⁴, which we touched on above. In this respect, the application of the judgment of the eye implied the freedom to borrow motifs and themes, carefully selected from several prototypes, and the use of their best qualities. Going a step further, Domenicos added to the 'giudizio dell' occhio' his own idea of 'the eyes of reason' ('los ojos de la razón')¹¹⁵, a phrase that appears to suggest that imitation through multiple sources should necessarily be based on the artist's refined judgment in order to create a harmonious whole. This concept seems to have been his response to the difficult question of how those who borrowed from many sources arrived at a consistent style. And on this point, the Minneapolis *Purification* does have a great deal to tell us. The central group of figures was probably inspired by Marcello Venusti's (after Michelangelo) the *Purification of the Temple* (The National Gallery, London); the man, who avoids Christ's blows, is also

¹¹¹ Marías & Bustamante, *Las ideas artísticas*, p. 143; Theotokopoulos, 'Annotations on Vitruvius' *De architectura*, p. 125.

¹¹² Marías & Bustamante, *Las ideas artísticas*, p. 143. Aristoxenus rejected the Pythagorean notion that mathematics was the ultimate judge of music, and supported instead the idea of the judgment of the ear. This seems to parallel Domenicos' belief in the judgment of the eye, based on experience and constant training.

¹¹³ Aristoxenus is mentioned by Vitruvius in his fifth book, in his fourth and fifth sections referring to harmony and the acoustics of amphitheatres respectively. Although Domenicos may have known the ancient musician either by Vitruvius or Boethius, who presented him in his *De musica*, a book that El Greco may have owned, it is possible that he first came into contact with Aristoxenus' theory in the orbit of the 'letterati' of the Farnese Palace, since a manuscript (now in the Vatican), which contained Aristoxenus' treatise *De re harmonica* (*Harmonic Elements*) and dedicated to Paul III, had been copied by the Greek scribe Giovanni Onorio da Maglie, a 'famigliari' of the Farnese household, M.L. Agati, *Giovanni Onorio da Maglie, copista greco (1535-1563)*, *Bollettino dei classici, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei*, 20, Rome, 2001, pp. 287-288, no 64.

¹¹⁴ Marías & Bustamante, *Las ideas artísticas*, p. 238; Theotokopoulos, 'Annotations on Vitruvius' *De architectura*, *Tetradia Eftthinis*, p. 125.

¹¹⁵ Marías & Bustamante, *Las ideas artísticas*, p. 80.

derived from Michelangelo's the *Conversion of St. Paul* (Capella Paolina, Vatican Palace), while the woman with the child on the right-hand side comes from Raphael's tapestry cartoon, *St. Peter and St. John Healing the Lame* (Victoria & Albert Museum, London); the old man in the foreground follows, inversely, the figure of St. Peter in Clovio's *Christ Giving the Keys to St. Peter* (Musée du Louvre, Paris), and the half-naked woman with her arm over the head reminds us the respective figure in Titian's *Bacchanal of the Andrians* (Museo del Prado, Madrid)¹¹⁶. Yet the picture formulates a clear, coherent and very impressive whole.

The 'eyes of reason' as an intellectual gift also echoed El Greco's belief that art 'that is more difficult is the most pleasing and, as a result, more intellectual' ('mas intelectual')¹¹⁷. Despite his intense interest in architecture, he thought that it was painting rather than architecture that could deceive wise men through imitation¹¹⁸. Assisted by the 'giudizio dell' occhio', painting could observe and imitate everything¹¹⁹, and thus, through judgment and understanding, it could become 'prudent' ('la pintura tiene un puesto de prudencia')¹²⁰. With these lines, Domenicos was echoing Aristotle, who argued that the 'right judgment is the same as good understanding' ('ευσυνεσία'), and that understanding was 'concerned with the same objects as Prudence' ('φρόνησις')¹²¹. The use of the word 'prudence' ('prudencia') in Domenicos' annotations was not selected at random, but was used to recall the Aristotelian theory of virtue, in which prudence was essential for the determination of the mean of moral virtue. And the acquisition of virtue relied heavily upon the exercise of prudence. Thus, when Domenicos argued that painting was 'prudent', he probably meant that, because it was concerned with the imitation of particular things, it could lead to knowledge of both practical and general principles¹²². Domenicos' 'iudicio', therefore, should be understood as the good judgment of a refined intellect¹²³, capable of judging and understanding correctly, which would in turn lead to prudence.

¹¹⁶ *El Greco: Identity and Transformation*, p. 362.

¹¹⁷ Marías & Bustamante, *Las ideas artísticas*, p. 80.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 165: "...que tiene por objeto la imitación de todas".

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

¹²¹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VI, x, 2-4, p. 359.

¹²² *Ibid.*, Book VI, vii, 7, pp. 345-347.

¹²³ For similar views see Marías, 'El Greco's Artistic Thought: From Eyes of the Soul to the Eyes of the Reason', p. 170, where Marías underlined that "this does not mean that El Greco was a believer in

To sum up, I suggest that the debates about imitation, and in particular about the importance of imitating a number of preceding and contemporary models, were what spurred Domenicos on to depict the portraits of the four artists in the Minneapolis *Purification*. His association with Roman scholars and his understanding of the theory of imitation, which was still under discussion in the circles of the ‘cognoscenti’ of Rome in the 1570s, and concerned oratory, literature and art, must have led him to treat the four artists as stockpiles to be drawn upon carefully and selectively. If Fulvio did discuss his ideas around art with Domenicos, as seems likely, he would have emphasized the importance not only of emulating ancient models, such as Apelles, whose feats with the brush were considered extraordinary, but also of surpassing the accomplishments of contemporary artists, such as Michelangelo and Raphael. Yet imitation produced not only admiration, but also competition. Perhaps the inclusion of the portraits in the Minneapolis *Purification* was El Greco’s way of exploring the idea of surpassing one’s models through good judgment – an idea that owed its inspiration in part to ancient orators, such as Cicero and Quintilian. Guided by his own ‘iudicio’, Domenicos could have been exploring the possibilities of using a diversity of sources and motifs, aiming not only to confront and outdo his rivals, but also to conjure an artistic and scholarly syncretism. Seen in this light, the Minneapolis *Purification* seems to reflect the painter’s preoccupation with his professional ‘forebears’, as well as his views regarding the complicated issue of imitation.

the intuitive judgment of the senses. El Greco was interested in the idea of *giudizio dell’occhio*...But he would probably have understand it as the judgment of an experienced intellect...”.

Chapter 5: Fulvio Orsini, Domenicos and the Ideal of ‘Doctus Pictore’

As we have suggested, the relationship between Domenicos and the Roman ‘letterati’, most particularly Fulvio Orsini, appears to have been highly significant for the painter’s experience in Rome. One of the most important, and well-connected, antiquarians in Rome during the second half of the sixteenth century, Orsini acted as librarian to three Farnese cardinals. An avid collector of both books and works of art, he was a formidable scholar. Given the pivotal role played by Fulvio in my reading of El Greco’s development during these years, it is worth outlining his interests and the circles he moved in in some detail.

Fulvio Orsini and his circle

At the age of nine Fulvio was accepted into the cathedral of San Giovanni in Laterano, where the canon, Gentile Delfini, undertook his education¹. A distinguished member of the Roman intellectual elite, Delfini had been entrusted by Cardinal Farnese with reconstructing the inscription of the *Fasti Capitolini*, which was found in the Forum in 1546. He was helped in this prestigious project by other leading intellectual lights, including Antonio Agustín, Ottavio Pantagato (1494-1567), Gabriele Faerno (1510-1561), Bartolomeo Marliano (circa d. 1560), and Tommaso de’ Cavalieri (1509-1587)². In the spacious rooms of his house, which was open to

¹ G.V. Rossi, *Iani Nicii Erythraei Imaginum Illustrium doctrinae...*, Cologne, 1642, vol. I, pp. 9-10; De Nolhac, *La Bibliothèque*, pp. 4-5. A canon was a member of the clergy attached to a cathedral and received a regular income without having particular obligations. The title was usually given to scholars, since the financial privileges accompanied it allowed them to live well and devote their time and energy to studying; G. Moroni, *Dizionario di erudizione storico-ecclesiastica*, Venezia, 1844, vol. VII, p. 236. Also, V. Fanelli, ‘Aspetti della Roma Cinquecentesca: le case e le raccolte archeologiche del Colocci’, *Studi romani*, x, 1962, p. 397, where the author mentions that the Delfini came from Venice to Rome during Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II’s (1194-1250) time. The inscription on Gentile’s casket in the family chapel in S. Maria in Aracoeli describes him as ‘erudite’ (‘eruditione Romano homine digna in primis exculcto’); V. Forcella, *Iscrizioni delle chiese e d’altri edifici di Roma dal secolo XI fin ai giorni nostri*, Rome, 1869, vol. I, p. 174, no. 662.

² R. Lanciani, *Storia degli scavi di Roma e notizie intorno le collezioni romane di antichità*, Rome, 1903, vol. II, p. 225, where it is cited Pirro Ligorio’s disagreement with the project; P. Mandosio, *Bibliotheca Romana seu Romanorum Scriptorum Centuriae*, Rome, 1682-1692, vol. II, pp. 138-139. The *Fasti* were about to be set up in the *Palazzo dei Conservatori* remodelled by Michelangelo, Mandowsky & Mitchell, *Pirro Ligorio’s Roman Antiquities*, pp. 33-34; Coffin, *Pirro Ligorio: The Renaissance Artist, Architect, and Antiquarian*, pp. 11-12. Bartolomeo Marliani’s transcription of the *Fasti* (1549) was soon followed by Carlo Sigonio’s *Regum, consulum, dictatorum ac censorum Romanorum Fasti* in 1550; McCuaig, *Carlo Sigonio*, pp. 9-10. For the Capitoline see for example, F. Saxl, ‘The Capitol during the Renaissance: A Symbol of the Imperial Idea’, in *Lectures*, London, 1957, vol. I, pp. 200-214. For Pantagato, one of the ‘famigliari’ of Cardinal Salviati, see Paschini, ‘Guglielmo Sirleto prima del cardinalato’ in *Tre ricerche sulla storia della chiesa nel Cinquecento*, p. 191; De Nolhac, *La Bibliothèque*, p. 21.

both well-known scholars and prominent ecclesiastics, such as Ignatius Loyola³, Delfini amassed a rich collection of ancient reliefs, coins, medals, and statues. Among these was the famous ‘foot’ (‘piede colotiano’) from the Colocci collection, passed on to him after Angelo Colocci’s death in 1549⁴. Gentile Delfini, Fulvio Orsini and Cardinal Marcello Cervini were among the many clerics and men of letters who frequented the Colocci gardens of his palace near Via del Nazareno⁵. The *Orti Colotiani*, erected in the ruins of the ancient *Horti Sallustiani*, was one of the most popular meeting places of humanists in Rome during the 1540s⁶. All of the above scholars shared a common interest in Greek letters, and after Colocci’s death many of the Greek manuscripts in his collection passed on to his friend, Gentile Delfini, and from him, after his death in 1559, to his protégé, Fulvio Orsini.

Delfini’s remarkable personality and erudition undoubtedly exerted tremendous influence on the young Fulvio. Indeed, it is likely that it was Gentile who taught him Greek and Latin, and who fuelled Fulvio’s love for books and his enthusiasm for the study and revival of antiquity. More importantly, it was Gentile who introduced him into the city’s circles of influence. On December 24 1554, Orsini, following in the footsteps of his protector, was ordained canon in the church of San Giovanni in Laterano⁷. Delfini must also have been responsible for introducing Fulvio to the Farnese from Lazio, as from 1540 onwards Gentile was in close contact with Cardinals Alessandro and Ranuccio Farnese (1530-1565), Paul III’s grandsons. Ranuccio was Archpriest of the cathedral of San Giovanni, to which Gentile and Fulvio belonged, and it was probably through Gentile’s intervention that Fulvio was appointed librarian and secretary to Ranuccio in 1558, and moved into the Palazzo

³ L. Von Pastor, *The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages*, Engl. transl. R.F. Kerr, London, 1894-1951, vol. V, pp. 370-71.

⁴ For the Colocci foot see Fanelli, ‘Le raccolte archeologiche del Colocci’, pp. 281-288; Coffin, *Pirro Ligorio: The Renaissance Artist, Architect, and Antiquarian*, p. 16.

⁵ De Nolhac, *La Bibliothèque*, p. 5.

⁶ Fanelli, ‘Aspetti della Roma Cinquecentesca’, pp. 397-398.

⁷ De Nolhac, *La Bibliothèque*, p. 8, where reservations are expressed whether this date is correct or not. For Orsini’s noble family see P. Litta, *Le famiglie celebri italiane*, Milan, 1819-1911, vol. IV, ‘Orsini di Roma’, plate XIV; in the same volume, following plate XXX, Litta reproduces the engraved images of the members of the House of Orsini, among which Fulvio Orsini’s portrait is depicted under the title ‘L’ archeologo Fulvio Orsini’. The same portrait reappears in E. Bonnaffè, ‘Sabba da Castiglione: Notes sur la curiosité italienne à la Renaissance’, *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, xxx, 1884, p. 145. Also T. Amayden, *La storia delle famiglie romane*, ed. C.A. Bertini, Rome, 1910, vol. I, pp. 374-376; G. Brigante Colonna, *Gli Orsini*, Milan, 1955; B. Davidson, ‘Daniele da Volterra and the Orsini Chapel - II’, *The Burlington Magazine*, 109, 1967, pp. 553-561.

Farnese⁸. Ranuccio may have had an added incentive to hire Orsini due to the close ties between the Farnese and the Orsini families, who were related through marriage⁹. After the premature death of Ranuccio in 1565, Fulvio was kept on by Cardinal Alessandro, who appears to have appreciated his competence and erudition¹⁰.

Indeed, Fulvio served his new patron well for many years. His duties involved, among others, augmenting the cardinal's collection with rare manuscripts and works of art, and the invention of complicated iconographic programmes consisting of mythological scenes, in which he was thought to be an expert. He was probably the inventor of the iconographic programme of at least two rooms in the Palazzo Farnese at Caprarola, namely the Sala d'Ercole (1566-1572) and the Sala del Mappamondo (1573-1575)¹¹. In all probability he also devised the programme for the Stanza dei Lanefici (1564), since the subject of the room was closely related to the story of Hercules, which Orsini had a particular interest in¹². However, his main concern was the arrangement of the cardinal's *studiolo* and the setting up of an *antiquario* at Palazzo Farnese in Rome. Fulvio was also on good terms with other members of the Farnese court, including Mattheos Devaris and Giulio Clovio, with whom he collaborated on at least one occasion; in 1573 they were instructed to select the best pieces from Count Lodovico Tedesco's collection, which was bequeathed to Cardinal Farnese after the count's death¹³. Fulvio must have admired Clovio, since he possessed five miniatures and a drawing by his hand, as well as the portrait of the miniaturist painted by El Greco¹⁴.

⁸ G.A. Cellini, 'Il contributo di Fulvio Orsini alla ricerca antiquaria', *Classe di Scienze morali, storiche e filologiche*, xviii, 2, Roma, 2004, p. 238; Ranuccio Farnese was ordained cardinal in 1545 at the age of 15; Robertson, *'Il Gran Cardinale'*, pp. 223-230.

⁹ The coats of arms of the Orsini of Mugnano, Pitigliano, Bracciano and Monterotondo decorated the inner courtyard of the Palazzo Farnese at Caprarola; L. Partridge, 'The Farnese Circular Courtyard at Caprarola: God, Geopolitics, Genealogy, and Gender', *The Art Bulletin*, lxxxiii, 2001, pp. 274-275.

¹⁰ Robertson, *'Il Gran Cardinale'*, p. 223

¹¹ J.R. Martin, *The Farnese Gallery*, Princeton, 1965, pp. 40-47.

¹² Partridge, 'Sala d' Ercole in the Villa Farnese at Caprarola: Part II', pp. 53-54; Fulvio's celebrated collection of medals and coins included three pieces with scenes from the Labours of Hercules. Partridge also argued that the full-length portrait of *A Man holding a Book* on the right side of the entrance at Sala d'Ercole in fact depicts Fulvio Orsini, (*ibid.*, p. 50, fig. 35). Overall, the decoration of the rooms of Villa Farnese at Caprarola was the result of the combined forces of *letterati*, such as Onofrio Panvinio (1529-1568) in the Sala dei Fasti Farnesiani (1562-1563), Annibale Caro (1507-1566), Cardinal Farnese's secretary, in the Camera dell' Aurora (1562) and in the Stanza della Solitudine (1565), and Cardinal Sirlento (1514-1585) in the Stanza della Penitenza (1570) and probably in the Stanza dei Sogni (1570); Robertson, *'Il Gran Cardinale'*, pp. 215-223; Partridge, 'The Farnese Circular Courtyard at Caprarola', p. 287, note 4.

¹³ Robertson, *'Il Gran Cardinale'*, p. 224.

¹⁴ De Nolhac, 'Les collections de Fulvio Orsini', pp. 435-436.

Fulvio quickly developed into a passionate collector of medals and coins himself, and the fruits of his labour can be seen in his book *Imagines et elogia virorum illustrium*, which first appeared in Rome in 1570, and won great fame for its author as a leading authority on Graeco-Roman antiquities¹⁵. Orsini's *Imagines* was probably published in response to the Portuguese humanist Achilles Stadius (Achille Estaço, 1524-1581), who only a year earlier had published the Greek and Roman busts from the private collections of the Cesi, Carpi and Medici as well as those in the Vatican¹⁶. With his book, Fulvio intended to bring to light the rare and precious items displayed in his and Cardinal Farnese's collections which, in his opinion, had been intentionally ignored by Stadius¹⁷. The work included portraits of Roman emperors and other learned men, gleaned from herms, busts, coins and other sources, yet the theme of his book was not new. Books with extensive sets of images of illustrious men were published throughout the sixteenth century, following the examples of Andrea Fulvio's *Illustrium imagines imperatorum et illustrium virorum*, which appeared in 1517. What was new in Orsini's book, and totally different from previous treatises¹⁸, was the cautious, almost scientific, way with which Fulvio approached the men portrayed, gathering information from a wide range of sources¹⁹. Both Fulvio's book, with its insistence on the true likeness of those included, and his collection, with its numerous images, should be viewed as an integral part of the collection housed in the Farnese Palace.

¹⁵ *Imagines et elogia virorum illustrium et eruditor. ex antiquis lapidibus et nomismatibus expressa cum annotationib. Ex bibliotheca Fulvi Ursini*, MDLXX, Romae Ant. Lafrerii formeis. The *Imagines* were amended and published two more times: one by Dirk Galle in 1598 and one by Johann Faber in 1606; Haskell, *History and its Images*, pp. 39-41.

¹⁶ Jongkees, *Fulvio Orsini's Imagines and the Portrait of Aristotle*, p. 4; C. Riebesell, *Die Sammlung des Kardinal Alessandro Farnese: Ein 'Studio' für Künstler und Gelehrte*, Weinheim, 1989, pp. 151-159. Stadius' library was extraordinarily rich in Italian, Latin, Greek, Hebrew and Syrian manuscripts and books; C. Trasselli, 'Librerie private nella Roma cinquecentesca', *Roma*, xiii, 1935, pp. 121-130.

¹⁷ Riebesell, *Die Sammlung des Kardinal Alessandro Farnese*, p. 152.

¹⁸ For example, Guillaume Rouillé, *Promptuaire des médailles*, Lyon, 1553; Enea Vico, *Discorsi sopra le medaglie de gli antichi*, Venice, 1555; Jacopo Strada, *Epitome du Thrésor des antiquitez*, Lyon, 1553; Guillaume Du Choul, *Discours de la religion des anciens romains*, Lyon, 1555-1556. Orsini must have been aware of Jacopo Strada's *Epitome*, since Strada was in close contact with a number of distinguished scholars, including Guillaume Du Choul, whose *Discours de la religion des anciens romains* first appeared in Lyon in 1555-1556, followed by an Italian translation two years later in 1558-1559; Haskell, *History and its Images*, pp. 13-25, esp. p. 16; for Du Choul's influence on El Greco see ch. 1, note 94. Strada's famous portrait by Titian in the Kunsthistorisches Museum of Vienna confirms the Mantuan art dealer's close relations with one of the most important painters of the century.

¹⁹ Haskell, *History and its Images*, p. 40.

The collection, which included busts, inscriptions, cameos, medals, books and manuscripts as well as paintings²⁰, was carefully arranged to function as a place of learning open to scholars and artists²¹. Fulvio seems to have accompanied many visitors around the palace showing its treasures²², although he was not always happy to do so, largely because he was bothered by ‘certain jokers (‘humoristi’) who without knowing history or any classical ideas, like certain strangers (‘forastieri’) too who understand nothing about painting, books, or statues, and make me waste my time...’²³. The above lines, which come from a letter that Fulvio sent to his friend Gianvincenzo Pinelli (1535-1601) in 1582, reveal the scholar’s special interests: history (‘historia’), classical philosophy (‘doctrina alcuna antica’), books and classical and contemporary art (‘non intendono ne artificio di pitture, ne antichità de libri o statue’) were among his favourite subjects²⁴. His collection reflects the same preferences.

Valued at the considerable sum of 13.500 *scudi* at the time of his death, the collection comprised a large number of paintings and drawings by notable artists, 150 ancient inscriptions or fragments of inscriptions, 58 marble busts or bas reliefs, 76 gold medals, 1900 silver medals and more than 500 bronze medals²⁵. As medals and coins were easily found and cost relatively little, they were greatly appreciated and carefully collected as evidence of lost statues, destroyed ancient buildings and

²⁰ Jestaz, ‘Le collezioni Farnese di Roma’, in *I Farnese: Arte e Collezionismo*, pp. 49-67.

²¹ A. Ronchini & V. Poggi, ‘Fulvio Orsini e sue lettere ai Farnesi’, *Atti e Memorie delle RR. Deputazioni di storia patria per le provincie dell’ Emilia*, iv, 1879, p. 65, letter xxi (letter from Orsini to Duke of Parma): “Alla qual cura io non mancarò di fede et diligenza debita, così per rispetto delle cose che vi sono rare et pretiose, come per causa delli studiosi, de’ quali ha da essere scuola pubblica questo Studio, secondo la mente del Sig.r Card.le Farnese...”; the translation of this passage is in Robertson, ‘*Il Gran Cardinale*’, pp. 224-226.

²² De Nolhac, *La Bibliothèque*, p. 56, where it is mentioned that Johannes Sambucus, who had met Fulvio in 1563, wrote him a recommendation letter for Philippe Apianus in 1564, in which he asked him to show Apianus his library and collection (‘Amabo te...doctissime Fulvi, da operam videat bibliothecam vestram, videat antiquitates’); Stenhouse, ‘Visitors, Display, and Reception in the Antiquity Collections of Late-Renaissance Rome’, pp. 406-414.

²³ De Nolhac, *La Bibliothèque*, p. 56, note 4; the above Engl. translation follows Stenhouse, ‘Visitors, Display, and Reception in the Antiquity Collections of Late-Renaissance Rome’, p. 414.

²⁴ De Nolhac, *La Bibliothèque*, p. 56, note 4.

²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 31; Jestaz, ‘Le collezioni Farnese di Roma’, in *I Farnese: Arte e collezionismo*, pp. 49-67; M. Hochmann, ‘Les dessins et les peintures de Fulvio Orsini et la collection Farnèse’, *Mélanges de l’école française de Rome: Italie et Méditerranée*, 105, 1993, pp. 49-91. Orsini’s collection of drawings and cartoons, which included more than forty, some by Raphael and Michelangelo, can be also studied alongside Tronsarelli’s similar collection. It seems that the two collectors had a lot in common: they both owned versions of Michelangelo’s *Venus and Cupid*, and a drawing by Sofonisba Anguissola; Lafranconi, ‘Antonio Tronsarelli’, p. 541, note 30; pp. 539, 545.

monuments, which might have been overlooked by literary sources²⁶. Judging from his collection, Fulvio cultivated an intense interest in numismatics, and approached coins as important pieces of historical evidence, probably inspired in this by the activities of Angelo Colocci²⁷. Viewed as uncorrupted sources for knowledge of the past, Fulvio particularly appreciated them because they bore images of Roman emperors, whose names filled the books of his library. This dialectical interplay between word and image seems to have motivated his collection of ancient and contemporary objects.

His inventory, which was first published by Pierre De Nolhac in 1884, gives us a detailed account of his holdings²⁸, and reveals that it far outstripped those of other humanists in terms of quality. Thus, we learn that he collected a large number of portraits of celebrated humanists, prominent members of the nobility and the Roman Curia, with whom he was on familiar terms. In this respect, Fulvio was probably following in the footsteps of Paolo Giovio, who had amassed almost four hundred portraits of humanists and rulers in his villa at Como²⁹. The majority of those portraits, which aroused much discussion among Giovio's contemporaries³⁰, were copies ('replicas') of images after a variety of sources, including coins, medals, busts, ancient sculpture, woodcuts, paintings and miniatures³¹. Giovio's fascination with the *verae imagines* of famous men correlates with his notion that history could be better understood by exploring the personality of its protagonists, as reflected in both their facial features and their deeds³². The illustration of the 1568 edition of Vasari's *Vite*

²⁶ J. Cunnally, *Images of the Illustrious: The Numismatic Presence in the Renaissance*, Princeton, 1999, pp. 3-11; Haskell & Penny, *Taste and the Antique*, pp. 49-52.

²⁷ Haskell, *History and Its Images*, p. 25.

²⁸ Orsini wrote his testament, in which he mentioned an inventory of his whole collection sealed with his own seal, on January 31, 1600. This original inventory has been lost, but Pierre de Nolhac managed to find a copy of it in the Ambrosiana Library among Pinelli's manuscripts. Orsini died on June 14, 1600, bequeathing his collection of Greek, Latin and Italian manuscripts and books to the Vatican Library and his works of art, including paintings and many of his Michelangelo's drawings to Cardinal Odoardo Farnese; De Nolhac, 'Les collections de Fulvio Orsini', pp. 427-428.

²⁹ Haskell, *History and Its Images*, pp. 44-45; Robertson, *Il Gran Cardinale*, pp. 210-215; Price Zimmerman, *Paolo Giovio*, pp. 159-163; L.S. Aleci, (review), *The Burlington Magazine*, 139, 1997, p. 487. Giovio's house was built near Borgo Vico, in the area that allegedly belonged to Pliny; Haskell, *History and Its Images*, p. 44.

³⁰ P.L. De Vecchi, 'Il museo Gioviano e le 'Verae Imagines' degli uomini illustri', in *Omaggio a Tiziano: la cultura artistica Milanese nell' età di Carlo V*, Milan, 1977, pp. 87-96; Haskell, *History and Its Images*, p. 48.

³¹ Haskell, *History and Its Images*, p. 45. Giovio's collection attracted the interest of men of letters, rich collectors and artists, who copied its contents again and again "to meet the demands of other collectors who were inspired by Giovio's achievement", (*ibid*, p. 47).

³² Price Zimmerman, *Paolo Giovio*, p. 207.

with the portraits of artists was also probably inspired by this idea³³. Like his friend Giovio, Vasari thought that portraits would serve the presentation of the artists' personalities, and consequently the historical truth, better than the written accounts alone.

Fulvio's passion for antiquity led him to imitate antiquity. In his collection of portraits he was probably emulating Roman patricians and men of letters, such as Gaius Asinius Pollio, who after 39 BC constructed the first public library in Rome, following a tradition that began with the kings of Alexandria and Pergamon³⁴. Pliny stressed that the demand for images of illustrious men was further 'evidenced by Atticus the friend of Cicero in the volume published on the subject and by the most benevolent invention of Marcus Varro, who actually by some means inserted in a prolific output of volumes portraits of seven hundred famous people'³⁵. Indeed, Fulvio referred to the portrait of Aristotle that decorated the library of Atticus in the Preface of his *Imagines* in 1570³⁶. Like Giovio before him³⁷, Fulvio thought that the collection of the *verae imagines* of prominent men could lead him to a 'restoration' of the ancient world. Unlike Giovio's portraits, however, which were on the whole executed by mediocre painters with undistinguished careers³⁸, Fulvio's inventory listed pictures by gifted and promising artists, such as Daniele da Volterra, Jacopino del Conte, Lavinia Fontana and El Greco. The portraits included many likenesses of dear friends, including Orazio Orsini, Gentile Delfini, Antonio Agustín, Carlo Sigonio, and Giulio Clovio³⁹. In the inventory we also read about a portrait of Cardinal Guglielmo Sirleto by Durante di Romano⁴⁰, a drawing by Federico Zuccaro depicting the same cardinal and a drawing of Cardinal Bernardino Maffei by Giulio Clovio⁴¹.

³³ Haskell, *History and Its Images*, p. 51; P.O. Rave, 'Paolo Giovio und die Bildnisvitenbücher des Humanismus', *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen*, 1, 1959, pp. 119-154.

³⁴ Pliny, Book XXXV, ii, 9-10, p. 267; the site of Atticus' villa on the Quirinal was well known to Fulvio and his friends, as it had been excavated in 1558; Jongkees, *Fulvio Orsini's Imagines and the Portrait of Aristotle*, p. 37.

³⁵ Pliny, Book XXXV, ii, 11, pp. 267-268.

³⁶ Orsini, *Imagines et elogia virorum illustrium*, Praefatio, p. 6.

³⁷ Price Zimmermann, *Paolo Giovio*, pp. 159-162, esp. p. 161: "Whatever the case, Giovio's legerdemain demonstrated his yearning for a palpable link with the classical past".

³⁸ Haskell, *History and Its Images*, p. 46.

³⁹ De Nolhac, 'Les collections de Fulvio Orsini', pp. 431, 433, 435, nos 6, 56, 54, 104, 43 respectively.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 433, no 53; Durante di Romano was probably Durante Alberti, associate of Federico Zuccaro.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 435, nos 96, 95 respectively.

Fulvio's portrait gallery was also in tune with the collections of his antiquarian friends, including Gerolamo Garimberto, who had decorated his library in Palazzo Gaddi on Monte Citorio with Greek and Roman busts and antique reliefs placed on cornices above the bookshelves⁴². In addition to aesthetic pleasure, Fulvio's collection of images of illustrious men gave him the assurance of his position as one of the leading antiquarians in Rome. His gallery, which he continued to expand throughout his life, may also have satisfied a deeper psychological need. Like a Roman senator honouring his familial ancestors with 'imagines' in the 'tablinum', the study, of his house, Fulvio presented his own noble 'ancestry', which his illegitimate birth had put in doubt. The one and only portrait of Fulvio himself was by Girolamo Siciolante da Sermoneta (1521-1575)⁴³, a painter who had worked for Ottavio Orsini in the former Orsini palace at Monterotondo near Rome (now Palazzo del Comune)⁴⁴. The portrait of Fulvio, alongside the portraits of his friends, seems to have represented his aspiration that posterity should remember him for his intellectual achievements and *areté* ('ἀρετή'), his virtue, in keeping with these other illustrious men. Perhaps he intended these portraits to be read as texts, or surviving histories, which, in Pliny's words, could 'transmit through the ages extremely correct likenesses of persons'⁴⁵. In this way, the gallery could be construed as containing examples of wisdom and virtue, which posited a certain union of body and mind through portraiture⁴⁶. It is precisely this double 'reality' of the sitters, their outer likeness and their inner virtue, which Domenicos would strive to represent in his own portraits. And I suggest that he was encouraged to do this through his association with Fulvio, whose personal tastes and interests as a scholar and collector, exerted considerable influence on the painter, as I shall argue.

⁴² Brown & Lorenzoni, 'Major and Minor Collections of Antiquities in Documents of the Later Sixteenth Century', p. 506; Brown & Lorenzoni, *Our Accustomed Discourse on the Antique: Cesare Gonzaga and Gerolamo Garimberto, Two Renaissance Collectors of Greco-Roman Art*, p. 51. It was Garimberto who advised Cardinal Farnese to build a 'studiolo' in his residence in the Cancelleria; Robertson, *Il Gran Cardinale*, p. 299.

⁴³ De Nolhac, 'Les collections de Fulvio Orsini', p. 433, no 55: "quadro senza cornice, col ritratto di Fulvio Orsino, di mano di Hieronimo Sermoneta".

⁴⁴ J. Hunter, *Girolamo Siciolante, pittore da Sermoneta (1521-1575)*, Italian transl. N. Coppini, Rome, 1996, pp. 117-119.

⁴⁵ Pliny, Book XXXV, ii, p. 263.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, Book XXXV, ii, p. 265: "...indolence has destroyed the arts, and since our minds cannot be portrayed, our bodily features are also neglected".

Domenicos' Portraits for Fulvio

The close contact between the scholar and the Cretan painter can be deduced with some certainty from the fact that seven of the latter's works are listed in the inventory of Fulvio's collection. Alongside the noted *Portrait of Giulio Clovio* (fig. 9) mentioned above, there were four *tondi* on copper, now lost. They represented important ecclesiastics, all dear to Fulvio: his ex-patron, Cardinal Ranuccio Farnese, and his present patron, Cardinal Alessandro Farnese; the Greek humanist Bessarion, and the classicist Cardinal Marcello Cervini⁴⁷. Cervini, in whose circle Fulvio had spent much of his youth, collaborated with Alessandro Farnese in 1539 on one of the most ambitious printing projects of the decade, the purpose of which was to publish the most important Greek and Latin manuscripts from the Vatican Library⁴⁸. Cardinal Bessarion meanwhile, whom Domenicos probably represented bearded⁴⁹, was an illustrious Greek scholar, and an owner of a library extraordinarily rich in Greek books and manuscripts, one of which was later acquired by Fulvio⁵⁰. The literary achievements of both cardinals, Bessarion and Cervini, were closely tied to important features of humanist learning, such as collecting, deciphering and disseminating the knowledge of Greek letters. In this line of distinguished scholars Fulvio apparently placed himself. On the other hand, the *tondi* of the Cardinals Ranuccio and Alessandro Farnese may be seen as Fulvio's tribute to the Farnese family, whose munificence and patronage was paramount for Fulvio's life and work. Domenicos was of course equally indebted to Cardinal Farnese for his generosity.

It is interesting that Domenicos chose to paint the portraits of these four men in the circular form of a *tondo*. Given that Titian, whose workshop Domenicos had apparently frequented in Venice, did not normally paint *tondi*, the idea of the circular shape does not appear to have derived from Venetian art, but from Rome's classical precedents. The portrait busts, medals and coins that were found so abundantly in Fulvio's collection could all have been sources of inspiration for Domenicos' pictures. In the Minneapolis *Purification of the Temple* (fig. 10), for example, he used

⁴⁷ De Nolhac, 'Les collections de Fulvio Orsini', p. 433, no 45 : "quattro tondi di rame col ritratto del cardinal Farnese, S. Angelo, Bessarione, cardinal et Papa Marcello, di mano del medo"; Hochmann, 'Les dessins et les peintures de Fulvio Orsini et la collection Farnèse', p. 80, no 45.

⁴⁸ Layton, *The Sixteenth Century Greek Book in Italy*, p. 462.

⁴⁹ M.J. Zucker, 'Raphael and the Beard of Pope Julius II', *The Art Bulletin*, 59, 1977, p. 525: "...Bessarion who appears with his beard in a portrait by Joos de Ghent, now in the Louvre, from the Ducal Palace at Urbino".

⁵⁰ De Nolhac, *La Bibliothèque*, p. 166, note 1; p. 399, no 31.

the classical bust model for the representation of the four artists, while for his *tondi* a different image type provided the most pertinent model: the *imago clipeata*. The shield portrait had a long tradition extending from the shield of Achilles, described in Homer, to the successors of Alexander the Great, the Ptolemies, and the Roman emperors. Shield portraits, which consisted of a bust or half-length portrait of deceased or living subjects in a ring frame, symbolised civic honour and virtue, particularly, military virtue, in Roman times⁵¹. Pliny, who gave an explanation of the origins of this sculptural type⁵², associated it with patronage, and particularly with good patronage, because the *clipeatae imagines* commemorated military heroes and statesmen and ‘everybody views [them] with pleasure and approval’⁵³. Together with the images of military men, there were also marble *tondo* busts of *virī docti*, scholarly men, such as Demosthenes and Socrates⁵⁴, which seem to have represented their intellectual virtue. Fulvio himself owned a bronze contorniate and a marble relief of Socrates, as well as two more ancient heads of the Greek philosopher⁵⁵, which were closely related to *clipeatae imagines*. It seems very likely that Domenicos not only saw these examples in Orsini’s collection, but that he could also have read Fulvio’s recently published *Imagines* (1570), and could moreover have discussed these ancient prototypes with Fulvio himself. A prominent recent example of the ‘*imago clipeata*’ in Rome was visible in the church of S. Pietro in Montorio, where Giovanni Antonio Dosio had used the type for the monument of Antonio Massa da Gallese (1568-1569), one of the intimates of Cardinal Farnese’s *famiglia*⁵⁶. It seems clear that Dosio was influenced in his use of the ‘*imago clipeata*’ – for both this tomb and that of the Marchese of Saluzzo in S. Lorenzo in Damaso (1574) - by Annibale Caro, who was a close friend of his⁵⁷. And like Caro before him, Fulvio could well have encouraged his own protégé to explore the classical models so readily available in the city and his own collection.

⁵¹ R. Winkes, ‘Pliny’s Chapter on Roman Funerary Customs in the Light of Clipeatae Imagines’, *American Journal of Archaeology*, 83, 1979, pp. 481-484.

⁵² Pliny, Book XXXV, xii-xv, pp. 269-271.

⁵³ *Ibid*, xxii, p. 269.

⁵⁴ C.C. Vermeule, III, ‘A Greek theme and Its Survivals: The Ruler’s Shield (Tondo Image) in Tomb and Temple’, *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 109, 1965, p. 382.

⁵⁵ Woolfson & Gregory, ‘Aspects of Collecting in Renaissance Padua’, pp. 261-262.

⁵⁶ Valone, ‘Giovanni Antonio Dosio: The Roman Years’, p. 540: “Dosio was not, of course, the first artist in the Renaissance to adapt antique images to tomb settings. He is, however, singular in the variety and number of types that he employed, again a possible tribute to Caro’s scholarship”.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 539.

Following the model of the *clipeatae imagines*, the *tondo* portraits were designed to depict not only the physical likeness of the sitters, but also their character and their intellectual achievements, as revealed through their deeds, so that they represented the apotheosis of the person depicted. The *tondo* portraits may be approached as modern examples of ancient art, since they also invited a comparison between painting and sculpture, and therefore could be seen in terms of the ‘paragone’. Whether or not Fulvio commissioned them, they represented an important addition to Fulvio’s coin–medal collection of illustrious men. Like his coins, the small size and weight of the *tondi* would have allowed the scholar to keep them with him at all times. As this type of image was rarely repeated in Domenicos’ oeuvre, some art historians have argued that the Cretan worked for some time as a miniaturist, following the example of Giulio Clovio⁵⁸. Despite the size of the *tondi*, however, there is not the slightest evidence that can lead us to support such as a hypothesis. Like other painters before him, including Giulio Romano⁵⁹ and Francesco Salviati, who had also experimented with small-scale portraits⁶⁰, Domenicos seems to be trying his hand at a different type of portraiture. The importance of these *tondi*, however, rests precisely on the fact that they were derived from distinct ancient types. And it is the literary environment of the Palazzo Farnese, and Fulvio’s intense interest in Greek portraiture in particular, that provide the intellectual context within which we should view these works.

In addition to the *tondi*, there are two further portraits listed in Fulvio’s inventory, which may have been executed by Domenicos: the *Portrait of a Young Man with a small Red Hat*⁶¹ and the *Portrait of Cardinal Pietro Bembo*. The latter was said to have been by the hand of a pupil of Titian (‘scolare di Titiano’)⁶² and, given that Domenicos has already been referred as Titian’s pupil (‘scolare di Titiano’) in the entry relating to the *View of Mount Sinai*, twelve numbers above in the same

⁵⁸ E. Du Gue Trapier, ‘El Greco in the Farnese Palace, Rome’, *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, vi, 1958, pp. 73-90, esp. p. 75: “[Domenicos] was at the time painting miniatures as was Clovio”.

⁵⁹ Smith, ‘Giulio Clovio and the “Maniera di Figure Piccole”’, p. 400.

⁶⁰ *From Raphael to Carracci: The Art of Papal Rome*, exh. cat., ed. D. Franklin, Ottawa, 2009, pp. 232-233, where Nelda Damiano attributes to Francesco Salviati a miniature with a portrait of Annibale Caro.

⁶¹ De Nolhac, ‘Les collections de Fulvio Orsini’, p. 433, no 44 : “un giovine di berretta rossa, di mano del med”.

⁶² *Ibid*, p. 433, no 52: “quadro corniciato di pero tinto, col ritratto del cardinal Bembo, di mano d’uno scolare di Titiano”. For Pietro Bembo, *Pietro Bembo e l’ invenzione del Rinascimento*, exh. cat., ed. G. Beltramini, D. Gasparotto & A. Tura, Padova, 2013.

inventory⁶³, it seems likely that this, too, was by El Greco. If little can be said about the style of these portraits, as they are both lost, the *Portrait of Cardinal Pietro Bembo* tells us a good deal about the kind of interest that probably motivated the cardinal's depiction. Pietro Bembo, who was an excellent Latinist and had a good command of Greek, was once the librarian of Cardinal Bessarion's library, and secretary to Leo X. He was made a cardinal in 1539 by Paul III and amassed an impressive collection of manuscripts, classical antiquities medals, maps, scientific instruments and paintings in his house in Padua. Fulvio had evinced an interest in Bembo and his collection, probably through his association with Giovio, who was in turn a close friend of Bembo. It seems that Bembo and Orsini shared similar ideals about humanist learning, and that their libraries, which reflected the wide range of their intellectual interests, should be viewed as part of their broader collections. In 1574 Fulvio embarked on lengthy negotiations with Torquato Bembo over his father's library⁶⁴. The rarest codices of Virgil and Terence, datable to the fourth and fifth centuries respectively and now in the Vatican Library, were two of the jewels that Fulvio eventually came to possess in exchange for marble sculptures⁶⁵. Given Fulvio's admiration for Bembo's literary achievements, it seems highly likely that it was the Roman scholar who proposed the depiction of the celebrated cardinal to Domenicos.

Yet Domenicos was not indifferent to his subject matter. The portrait suited his purposes as an aspiring artist wishing to exhibit his range of skills. From the description of the portrait in Fulvio's inventory, we learn that Domenicos depicted Pietro Bembo as a cardinal ('ritratto del cardinal Bembo'), namely aged, as he became a cardinal at the age of sixty-eight. It is likely therefore that he was shown with a beard, and with the scarlet cape and *biretta* (hat), which were the symbols of his status, in the manner that Titian had already portrayed him. Titian, who was a lifelong friend of Bembo, painted his portrait twice, in c.1540 as a cardinal (Samuel H. Kress Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.), and in c.1546 as an old man (Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest). It is also likely that Titian provided his associate, Valerio Zuccato, with a cartoon for a portrait of Bembo in mosaic (1542, Museo

⁶³ De Nolhac, 'Les collections de Fulvio Orsini', p. 433, no 39: "quadro corniciato di noce con un paese del monte Sinai, di mano d'un Grego scolare di Titiano".

⁶⁴ De Nolhac, *La Bibliothèque*, p. 94.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, p. 109; in 1584, Fulvio could boast that he had acquired all the treasures from Bembo's collection.

Nazionale del Bargello, Florence)⁶⁶. By painting the same sitter as Titian, Domenicos, who was most likely well aware of these earlier portraits, must have felt confident enough to be compared to the Venetian master⁶⁷. This type of competition would surely have amused Fulvio, who could have seen parallels with the ancient competition between the famous Apelles and the less well-known Protogenes, an often repeated anecdote described by Pliny⁶⁸. If the Cretan offered Bembo's portrait to Fulvio, as I believe, this would have happened either before 1572, when the painter was still at the Farnese household, or more likely around 1574, when the negotiations between Fulvio and Torquato began⁶⁹. If this second hypothesis is correct, the picture would confirm the close contact between Fulvio and Domenicos after 1572. In any event, Bembo's portrait clearly reflects the taste and breadth of Fulvio's literary pursuits and suggests that Domenicos shared them.

The View of Mount Sinai

The final painting listed in Fulvio's inventory is the *View of Mount Sinai* (fig. 12), which is described as 'a landscape of Mount Sinai by the hand of a Greek pupil of Titian' ('Grego scolare di Titiano')⁷⁰. This work is unanimously attributed to Domenicos and identified with the picture now in the Historical Museum of Crete, in Iraklion. The painting depicts a landscape with the peaks of Mount Sinai and the Monastery of St. Catherine, a place of contemplation and seclusion. It has been accepted that Domenicos used an engraving of the same theme by Giovanni Battista Fontana (1569, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris) (fig. 52) for the execution of the painting, and that the *View of Mount Sinai* should be dated after the similar scene contained in the Modena Triptych (c.1568)⁷¹. Although the relationship between El

⁶⁶ *Tiziano*, exh. cat., ed. G.C.F. Villa, Rome, 2013, p. 182, pl. 23.

⁶⁷ Goffen, *Renaissance Rivals: Michelangelo, Leonardo, Raphael, Titian*, p. 6: "rivalry implies parity or near-parity, which is to say, one's rival is essentially one's peer: one does not duel with an inferior".

⁶⁸ Pliny, Book XXXV, xxxvi, 81-83, pp. 321-323; xxxvi, 87-88, pp. 325-327.

⁶⁹ When negotiations ended around 1582, Domenicos had already left Rome; De Nolhac, *La Bibliothèque*, pp. 91-108; S. Eiche, 'On the Dispersal of Cardinal Bembo's Collections', *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, 27, 1983, p. 356.

⁷⁰ De Nolhac, 'Les collections de Fulvio Orsini', p. 433, no 39. The painting was bequeathed to Odoardo Farnese and was listed in the inventories of 1653 and 1662-1680 of the Farnese Palace; *El Greco of Crete: Exhibition on the occasion of the 450th anniversary of his birth*, ed. N. Hadjinicolaou, Iraklion, 1 Sept.-10 Oct. 1990, pp. 186-191, esp. p. 188.

⁷¹ Fontana's engraving, which was published by Luca Bertelli in Venice, exists in two impressions: one in Paris and another in the Uffizi, Florence. At the bottom right of the engraving, however, a text in a cartouche appears, signed by the Venetian printer Bolognino Zaltieri. The latter identified the author of the image upon which Fontana based his print as Bonifacio Stefani da Ragusa, Bishop of Ston in Dalmatia. Mount Sinai occupies the central part of the engraving, with Moses standing on it and

Greco's picture and Fontana's print is particularly close, it should not be overstressed, since it does not explain the choice of this particular subject. The Monastery at Sinai, which was founded by the Emperor Justinian in the sixth century to commemorate the site on which God had revealed himself to Moses, was considered to be the cradle of erudition in the Greek Church. It housed an impressive library that included a great number of codices and illuminated manuscripts by the finest scribes and artists. It is curious, however, that such a picture, with its unusual subject matter and its distinct post-Byzantine character, came to be listed in the inventory of a Roman scholar. It has been argued that the painting was acquired by Fulvio because it represented his 'intellectual enthusiasm' for cartography⁷². Far from maintaining that this reading is 'wrong', I would argue that Fulvio could have become interested in the picture for other reasons as well. In fact, I would like to suggest that the *View of Mount Sinai*, which seems to have been conceived as a laudatory description of the Monastery of St. Catherine, could also be seen as referencing the Greek studies that were so dear to Fulvio, and as alluding to specific ancient texts.

The imposing landscape, animated by groups of people with their animals, narrates a story: the actual voyage to the orthodox pilgrimage site in quest of knowledge and peace of mind from worldly cares and perturbations. The process of a pilgrimage takes place right in front of the viewer's eyes: a pilgrim in a bluish tunic and red mantle, accompanied by his servant and his horse, is bending to kiss the hand of an aged man, obviously a prior, as he is escorted by another brother and a servant.

holding the tablets of the Ten Commandments. Aaron's mountain in on the left hand side and on the right another mountain with two angels has been depicted. El Greco repeated from Fontana's engraving the motif of the three mountains, the valley below, and the fortified monastery. For the relationship between Fontana's and El Greco's images, *El Greco of Crete*, pp. 350-353; C. Gardner von Teuffel, 'El Greco's View of Mount Sinai as Independent Landscape', in *El Greco of Crete: Proceedings of the International Symposium held on the occasion of the 450th anniversary of the artist's birth*, Iraklion, 1990, ed. N. Hadjinicolaou, Iraklion, 1995, pp. 161-172; G. Dillon, 'El Greco e l'incisione veneta. Precisazioni e novità', (*ibid.*, pp. 229-249, esp. pp. 236-237); *El Greco: Identity and Transformation*, p. 363.

⁷² Gardner von Teuffel, 'El Greco's View of Mount Sinai as Independent Landscape', pp. 171-172: "Among Orsini's many intellectual enthusiasms was the nascent science of cartography...This intellectual background may provide a satisfying rationale for the presence of El Greco's *Prospect of Mount Sinai* in the Orsini collection". For the opposite view, see R. Cueto, 'Mount Sinai and El Greco's Spirituality', in *El Greco of Crete: Proceedings of the International Symposium held on the occasion of the 450th anniversary of the artist's birth*, pp. 173-185, esp. p. 184: "...it is anachronistic to limit that interest in the later Budapest version [View of Mount Sinai] to mere physical topography. On the contrary, in both the Modena and Budapest versions, the modern viewer is confronted with a sophisticated exercise in spiritual topography". El Greco's *View of the Mount Sinai* was in the collection of Barón Ferenc Hátvany in Budapest from 1921, later in a private collection in Vienna (from 1974), and in the art market of London in 1988; it was bought by the Historical Museum of Crete (Iraklion) in 1990.

Two more travellers and three camels are approaching, while three more bearded male figures wearing the hat and mantle of the *pellegrino* and holding long staffs, or walking sticks, are coming from the left. The fact that the same theme of pilgrimage was also depicted, probably earlier, by Domenicos in his signed Modena triptych indicates that pilgrimage was central to understanding both pictures, and may have served as a kind of simulated journey for those who could not travel and enjoy the memory of the actual place.

Given the emphatic rendering of the scene, I think it is possible that the painter was self-consciously referencing the idea of an independent landscape painting with people in everyday situations, as recounted by Pliny when discussing the ancient painter, Studius (or Ludius, or Spurius Tadius)⁷³. Pliny had, however, criticised Studius for painting panoramas of incidental details on the walls of private houses, and praised instead Protogenes and Apelles for never frescoing private residences⁷⁴. If Domenicos did use Studius as a starting point for exploring this genre, he converted the ancient painter's special subject matter and medium – mural – into something that Pliny much preferred, namely a portable easel painting of a landscape in which people were engaged in a serious narrative. Thus, he transformed an everyday situation into a lyrical representation, synthesizing different artistic examples: Studius' minor genre is assimilated into Protogenes' and Apelles' lofty histories.

Although Pliny rarely used the rhetorical device of *ekphrasis* in his brief narrations of artists' works, the liveliness with which he described Studius' landscape paintings echoed the literary descriptions of works of art by Philostratus the Elder in his *Imagines*. In the latter's account of the panorama of the *Bosphorus*, the Greek writer encouraged the viewer to see and hear with his imagination all the minor details of the described landscape: 'as you go on to other parts of the painting, you will meet with flocks, and hear herds of cattle lowing, and the music of the shepherds'

⁷³ Pliny, Book XXXV, xxxvii, 116, p. 347: "...[Studius] who first introduced the most attractive fashion of painting walls with pictures of country houses and landscapes gardens, groves, woods, hills [...] together with various sketches of people going for a stroll or sailing in a boat or on land going to country houses riding on asses or in carriages..."; S. Blake McHam, *Pliny and the Artistic Culture of the Italian Renaissance: The Legacy of the Natural History*, New Haven & London, 2013, p. 171: "Pliny's descriptions seem to have been the fundamental inspiration for a whole new category of Italian Renaissance painting –the independent landscape".

⁷⁴ Pliny, Book XXXV, xxxvii, 118, p. 349: "But among artists great fame has been confined to painters of pictures only ['tabulas'] for they did not decorate walls, merely for owners of property, or houses...Apelles had no wall-frescoes in his house...".

pipes will echo in your ears'⁷⁵. Both Pliny and Philostratus recreated with words the lifelikeness of what was visible in the natural world. Similarly, Domenicos revived a reception scene by narrating the emotions of the group of people through their gestures and postures. We can sense, for example, the relief and happiness of the pilgrims arriving at the sacred shrine after a dangerous and tiring journey, and we can even hear the prior's and his servants' voices wishing the pilgrim welcome. The illusionism of the scene is further increased by the vividness of the jewel-like colours; this idea of vividness seems to echo Quintilian, who in the eighth book of his *Institutio Oratoria* praised 'enargeia' ('ενάργεια'), or vividness in representation, and claimed that 'it is a great gift to be able to set forth the facts on which we are speaking clearly and vividly'⁷⁶. Domenicos showed not only 'that an event took place' but also, in Quintilian's words, 'how it took place, and that not as a whole, but in detail'⁷⁷. He managed to appeal to the senses of his spectator in such a way that the spectator was turned into an eyewitness; one does not only see the actual events depicted before one's eyes, but one also experiences in one's mind the emotions felt by the original witnesses. Thus, the *View of Mount Sinai* becomes a representation similar to a verbal structure in which both audience and speaker are spectators of the event described. Using 'enargeia', the painter creates the illusion that the absent object of description – the actual Mount Sinai – is actually present in discourse. Quintilian called this vivid description of a place 'topographia' ('τοπογραφία')⁷⁸, a compound which comes from the word 'topos' ('τόπος'), place, pertaining to the landscape, and the infinitive 'graphein' ('γράφειν'), to paint, which implies the poetic representation of a place.

It is assumed that the *View of Mount Sinai* was painted in Venice, due to the golden background, the luminosity of colours⁷⁹, a certain awkwardness in the depiction of the figures in the foreground, and the unconvincing rendering of the space. If this was the case, and if Domenicos was deliberately referencing Pliny in this work, then he must have been familiar with the *Natural History* prior to his Roman sojourn. Pliny's work was certainly well known in Venice through the multiple printings of the text in both Latin and Italian, and through the commentaries

⁷⁵ Philostratus, *Imagines*, Book 1.12, pp. 49-55, esp. p. 53.

⁷⁶ Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, VIII, iii, 62, p. 245.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, IX, ii, 40, p. 57.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, IX, ii, 44, p. 59.

⁷⁹ Gardner von Teuffel, 'El Greco's View of Mount Sinai as Independent Landscape', p. 171: "This classical borrowing [the white horse], together with the use of pure red and blue pigment next to white highlights argues strongly for the panel's execution at Venice and subsequent transfer to Rome".

of Ermolao Barbaro (1454-1493) and Marcantonio Sabellico (1436-1506), published in 1492 and 1497 respectively⁸⁰. Ermolao was the uncle of Daniele Barbaro, who was nominated patriarch-elect of Aquileia as the potential successor of Giovanni Grimani. Daniele remained on good terms with Giovanni throughout his life, and the friendship between the two families was further strengthened by marriage alliances. It is, therefore, entirely plausible that Domenicos first came to know Pliny's text in the cultivated circle of Giovanni Grimani. If there was a deliberate nod to an ancient genre in El Greco's treatment of the *View of the Mount Sinai*, this would surely have made it particularly desirable to a man of Fulvio's interests. It is likely that he managed to acquire the picture as a result of his extensive contact with the Greek painter, not to mention his role as an artistic advisor to Cardinal Farnese, whom Domenicos aspired to impress.

The ownership of the above pictures is an illustration of Fulvio's erudition and, in particular, his special taste in portrait iconography. Although nothing is known about how these paintings were displayed in his 'studiolo', their primary subject closely followed the scholar's antiquarian approach; they were about ancient religion (the *View of Mount Sinai*), political and public affairs (the four 'tondi' and the *Portrait of Pietro Bembo*) and his private life (*Portrait of Giulio Clovio* and *Portrait of a Man with a Red Hat*). The paintings listed in Fulvio's collection together with the Washington *Purification of the Temple*, the Metropolitan *Healing of the Blind*, and the drawing of *Day* appear to fall roughly into two categories: those that the painter may have brought with him from Venice, either fully or half finished, such as for example the Metropolitan *Healing of the Blind* and the *View of Mount Sinai*; and those that must have been painted during 1570-1572, or later. In the second category we can place the *tondi* of the four cardinals, as they required access to images of the cardinals' features, and the *Portrait of Giulio Clovio*, which may have been painted from life. The same applies to the Minneapolis *Purification of the Temple*, not only because Clovio's image seems to have been taken from the above portrait, but also because the depiction of the four artists in the lower right hand side entails a theoretical approach to art, which as I have argued, was surely shaped by the social and literary ideas acquired in Rome. The *Portrait of the Cardinal Pietro Bembo*, meanwhile, may have been painted somewhat later, around 1574, as discussed.

⁸⁰ Blake McHam, *Pliny and the Artistic Culture of the Italian Renaissance*, p. 149.

The Healing of the Blind

If the painting of the *tondi* was aided by Fulvio's advice, two further pictures by Domenicos indicate the scholar's influence on him at this time. The Parma version of the *Healing of the Blind* (Galleria Nazionale, Parma) (fig. 13) and the *Boy Lighting a Candle* (Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte, Naples) (fig. 14) were both listed in the Farnese inventories of 1644 and 1653⁸¹. Although there is no indication that Domenicos ever received money for either of these paintings, it is likely that they were painted for and presented to Alessandro Farnese, as they are both highly finished. It is also probable that Fulvio played a pivotal role in the choice of the subject matter, at least of the *Boy Lighting a Candle*, and that he may have acted as the painter's adviser for the *Healing of the Blind*. It is not perhaps a coincidence that the subject of both paintings is sight and insight, physical and intellectual illumination. Attention to classical detail and to literary references in both pictures strongly suggests knowledge of ancient texts and the study of classical monuments.

Domenicos painted the subject of the *Healing of the Blind* three times. Art historians seem to agree that the earliest version is the small picture with jewel-like colours, now in Dresden, attributed to the painter's Venetian period (fig. 3), which we touched on in Chapter 2. Most scholars also agree that the Parma painting was executed in Rome around 1572, as it belonged to the Farnese collection. They disagree, however, on the dating of the version of the *Healing of the Blind* in The Metropolitan Museum (fig. 4)⁸², which we also discussed in passing when we considered El Greco's Venetian oeuvre. Combining motifs, figures and ideas from the other two versions, the Metropolitan *Healing of the Blind* has been described either as 'the most Venetian of the three'⁸³, or as owing 'some of its style to contemporary Roman art'⁸⁴. In any case, the three pictures seem to have been painted during a short period of time, probably between the years 1569-1574, and at least one, the Metropolitan *Healing of the Blind*, may have been carried by the painter on his travels, as mentioned above. On the other hand, the Parma *Healing of the Blind* can be

⁸¹ *I Farnese: Arte e collezionismo*, pp. 246-250.

⁸² A.G. Xydis, 'El Greco's 'Healing of the Blind'', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, lxiv, 1964, pp. 301-306; Fahy, 'The Miracle of Christ Healing the Blind', pp. 94-104; I. Barskova Vechnyak, 'El Greco's Miracle of Christ Healing the Blind: Chronology Reconsidered', *Metropolitan Museum Journal*, 26, 1991, pp. 177-182.

⁸³ Barskova Vechnyak, 'El Greco's Miracle of Christ Healing the Blind: Chronology Reconsidered', p. 177; *El Greco*, [exh. cat., ed. D. Davies, New York/London, 2004], pp. 82-83.

⁸⁴ Fahy, 'The Miracle of Christ Healing the Blind', p. 102.

attributed with some certainty to the painter's Roman sojourn, and between the end of 1570 and 1572, due to a number of certain borrowings. The nude figure on the left, for example, has clearly been modelled on the Farnese *Hercules*, which adorned the courtyard of Palazzo Farnese until 1787⁸⁵, while the head of the old man behind him is based on the *Laocoön*⁸⁶, the famous marble statue discovered in 1506 near S. Maria Maggiore. While Domenicos could have copied these from prints after the originals, the two men in contemporary clothes, one behind the gesturing man and the other at the extreme left edge, are usually identified either as the painter himself and the future Duke Alessandro Farnese, or as Don John of Austria and the Duke Alessandro Farnese respectively, making it more likely that the painting was executed in Rome⁸⁷. Given that Fulvio had access to portraits of the Farnese family, it might have been him who advised the Cretan to introduce at least one of these figures into the picture, in order to draw the cardinal's interest.

The Parma *Healing* is divided into two distinct parts: the miracle in the immediate foreground, and the architectural space that dominates the middle and far background. Unlike Titian, who had a limited interest in architectural forms, Domenicos' encounter with architecture took place early on, as we have discussed⁸⁸. In this painting, the artist chose to include the porch of the Pantheon on the left, and the Baths of Diocletian in the background⁸⁹. Immediately recognised, such classical architecture operates as a generic marker, which suggests that we are in Rome. As it was the most well-preserved building of Imperial Rome, the Pantheon became an important site of study for all those who were engaged in the study of architecture. The temple also had a special significance for the painters of Rome, as their confraternity, the Congregazione dei Virtuosi al Pantheon, had its chapel there, and a number of important artists, such as Raphael, Perino del Vaga, Taddeo Zuccaro and Vignola, were granted the privilege to be buried there⁹⁰. Why Domenicos chose to depict the ruins of the Baths of Diocletian in the background of the picture, however, is less clear. It has been argued that this depiction was based on a drawing by

⁸⁵ Haskell & Penny, *Taste and the Antique*, p. 229.

⁸⁶ *El Greco: Identity and Transformation*, pp. 367-368.

⁸⁷ Du Gue Trapier, 'El Greco in the Farnese Palace, Rome', p. 80; Puppi, 'El Greco in Italy and Italian Art', in *El Greco: Identity and Transformation*, p. 111.

⁸⁸ See chapter 2.

⁸⁹ Barskova Vechnyak, 'El Greco's Miracle of Christ Healing the Blind: Chronology Reconsidered', p. 180.

⁹⁰ D. Karmon, *The Ruin of the Eternal City: Antiquity & Preservation in Renaissance Rome*, Oxford, 2011, p. 162.

Giovanni Antonio Dosio published in Bernardo Gamucci's *Libri quattro dell' antichità della città di Roma* (Venice, 1565) and Dosio's own *Urbis Romae aedificiorum illustrium* (Florence, 1569)⁹¹. The Baths of Diocletian were the largest of the ancient Roman Baths and a key surviving example of monumental Roman architecture. Their massive size was stimulating for both Italian and foreign architects, such as Palladio, who studied and probably surveyed on the spot the Baths of Diocletian⁹²; Pirro Ligorio, who made a drawing of them in 1558⁹³; and the little-known Sebastian van Noyen (d. 1557) from Utrecht, who worked for the Hapsburgs in Brussels as well as for Cardinal Granvelle⁹⁴. In 1563-1564 Michelangelo had converted part of the Baths into the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli, the interior of which, alongside the Pantheon, gave a good idea of a living classical interior. In contrast to the perfectly preserved Pantheon, Michelangelo's interventions at the Baths of Diocletian show the architects were also interested in the challenges posed by preservation⁹⁵, an aspect of architectural practice that may also have intrigued El Greco. The preservation of antiquity in the city was just as important as the close study of ancient remains by both humanists and artists. It is also possible that Domenicos had the opportunity to study Ligorio's reconstruction drawing of the Baths of Diocletian, given the close relationship between Fulvio and Ligorio, but the panoramic view of the Baths would have been little help to him. Dosio's drawing, on the other hand, which represented the interior of the Baths in perspective, could have been used as a background setting in the same way that Domenicos had included Serlio's stage sets in his earlier pictures. The Greek painter who, as discussed, might

⁹¹ Bury, 'El Greco's Books', pp. 389-390 and fig 50; *El Greco of Crete*, pp. 354-356, no 7; *El Greco: Identity and Transformation*, pp. 367-368, esp. p. 368, no 17; Du Gue Trapier, 'El Greco in the Farnese Palace, Rome', p. 80.

⁹² Palladio showed an intense interest in Roman *Thermae* during his trips to Rome, and especially during his last visit in 1554, when he probably met Ligorio personally. A year earlier, in 1553, Ligorio had published a small book on the antiquities of Rome, which described the Baths of Decius on the Aventine; L. La Follette, 'A Contribution of Andrea Palladio to the Study of Roman *Thermae*', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 52, 1993, pp. 189-198; *Palladio's Rome*, pp. 29, 206.

⁹³ Mandowsky & Mitchell, *Pirro Ligorio's Roman Antiquities: The Drawings in MS XIII. B.7 in the National Library of Naples*, p. 3; Coffin, *Pirro Ligorio: The Renaissance Artist, Architect, and Antiquarian*, p. 23.

⁹⁴ In 1558 Hieronymus Cock published van Noyen's studies of the Baths of Diocletian. The prints contain ground plans, measurements and elevations of the complex; C.P. Heuer, 'A Copperplate for Hieronymus Cock', *The Burlington Magazine*, 1247, 2007, pp. 96-99. Cock's series of the 'Therme Diocletiani' indicates the growing interest in the one of ancient Rome's largest buildings.

⁹⁵ Karmon, *The Ruin of the Eternal City*, p. 72, where he mentioned that the restoration of the Baths of Diocletian began as early as in 1469-1470; Michelangelo's interest in preservation problems also began early in his career in 1510, (*ibid*, pp. 279-280, note 77).

well have met Dosio in person, since the latter spent the decade 1566-1576 in Rome⁹⁶, most likely possessed a copy of Gamucci's or Dosio's book⁹⁷. The use of the woodcut, however, does not exclude the possibility that Domenicos visited the *Terme* of Diocletian, either alone or in the company of Fulvio, and compared the physical interior with its visual description⁹⁸.

By using two important ancient buildings, symbolising Rome's religious and civic pride, as a setting for his picture, Domenicos attempted to adduce visual evidence of the 'restored' Rome before the eyes of his learned viewers. In this way, Rome was selectively remade through his brush and transformed into a sort of common 'locus memoriae'. The placement of classical architecture into the scene both as physical location and visual reconstruction based on texts, suggests that Domenicos considered it a visualisation of the concept of the 'imitation of the others', the ancients. If this is the case, his account of the healing of the blind in the foreground may signify 'mimesis', or imitation of life, an impression that is strengthened by the insertion of contemporary portraits into the scene. Such a manipulation implies that the Cretan understood the concept of 'imitation' as twofold, and apparently thought of the imitation of nature as the fundamental purpose of art, siding with the dictum: 'ars aemula natura'. The picture hints at what later became apparent in his annotations on Vitruvius, namely that 'painting is the only discipline that can judge all things, form and colour, given that its objective is the imitation of all those things'⁹⁹. While he thought that it was necessary to study the ancient and modern buildings – the works of others – in order to become a good architect, since 'architecture is a mere invention of man'¹⁰⁰, he believed that painting started with the study of nature in order to improve it: painting 'is not only born [out of nature], but is also capable of correcting it'¹⁰¹. While it is clear that the issue of imitation occupied him later, in Spain, as I have argued, it is likely that he first encountered these ideas while in Rome, so he might well have been alluding to them in a work such as this.

⁹⁶ Valone, 'Giovanni Antonio Dosio: The Roman Years', pp. 528-541. After the publication of Gamucci's book in 1565, Dosio collaborated with Giovanni Battista de' Cavalieri in his *Urbis Romae aedificiorum* (*ibid*, p. 541).

⁹⁷ Bury, 'El Greco's Books', p. 390.

⁹⁸ De Nolhac, *La Bibliothèque*, p. 56, note 4; Stenhouse, 'Visitors, Display and Reception in the Antiquity Collections of Late Renaissance Rome', p. 414.

⁹⁹ Marías & Bustamante, *Las ideas artísticas*, p. 165: "la pintura es la única que puede juzgar todas las cosas, forma, color, como la que tiene por objeto la imitación de todas"; Theotokopoulos, 'Annotations on Vitruvius' De architectura', *Tetradia Efthinis*, pp. 133-134.

¹⁰⁰ Marías & Bustamante, *Las ideas artísticas*, p. 164: "la arquitectura simple invención del hombre".

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, p. 164: "...como la pintura, que no solo nace...sino que alega corregirla".

Boy Lighting a Candle

Executed around 1572, Domenicos' *Boy Lighting a Candle* (Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte, Naples) (fig. 14) is listed in the Farnese inventories of 1644 and 1653¹⁰², and was probably painted for Cardinal Farnese. The picture was most likely situated in one of the three *Stanze dei Quadri* of the Farnese Palace, which are mentioned in the inventories of 1641, 1644 and 1653¹⁰³. Together with the library, these rooms became the focal point of the humanists and artists. The fact that there is at least one more signed version of the *Boy Lighting a Candle* with almost identical dimensions, now in the Virginia Kraft Payson collection (Florida)¹⁰⁴, indicates that the subject preoccupied the Cretan painter for some time. Inspired by Pliny's *Natural History*¹⁰⁵, the *Boy* can be interpreted as a straightforward response to the examples of Graeco-Roman art, an emulation of lost ancient pictures. Perhaps one could see a parallel between Domenicos' picture here and the endeavours of architects like Ligorio and Dosio, who also sought to reconstruct ancient Rome in their drawings¹⁰⁶.

El Greco's picture is striking in its simplicity. A boy, placed in the centre of the painting and dressed in contemporary clothes, is blowing on an ember to light a candle. He is not looking at the viewer, but he is so closely depicted that the two spaces, his and ours, seem to overlap and interweave. The light, which illuminates every single inch of the boy's face, increases the illusionism of the picture so that the spectator, who tries to penetrate the darkness, feels that he or she is beholding an actual person, not a painted image. As the painting eschews narrative and evades iconographic clarity, it shows us an El Greco who was capable of thinking in figures without the help of narrative. And it is the *trompe l'oeil* effect that invites us to look behind the naturalism and to seek a deeper significance in the work. The following analysis will attempt to show that the picture is a kind of reinvention and development of the contemporary understanding of ancient art, which also tells us something of the viewers the Cretan was interested in, the kind of audience that liked to debate and converse, to share sophisticated points of view and read ancient texts.

¹⁰² *I Farnese: Arte e collezionismo*, p. 246.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, pp. 53, 96; C. Robertson, 'The Artistic Patronage of Cardinal Odoardo Farnese', *Proceedings of the Conference 'Les Carraches et les décors profanes'*, Rome, 1988, pp. 359-372, esp. pp. 367-371.

¹⁰⁴ *El Greco in Italy and Italian Art*, pp. 354-359, 530-533, no 46; Waterhouse, 'El Greco's Italian Period', p. 80.

¹⁰⁵ J. Bialostocki, 'Puer Sufflans Ignes', in *Arte in Europa: Scritti di storia dell' arte in onore di Edoardo Arslan*, Milan, 1966, vol. I, pp. 591-595, esp. p. 593.

¹⁰⁶ Burns, 'Pirro Ligorio's Reconstruction of Ancient Rome: The Antiquae Urbis Imago of 1561', in *Pirro Ligorio, Artist and Antiquarian*, pp. 41-42.

By setting his figure vividly before our eyes, Domenicos presented an image that could be contemplated, and thus invited interpretations. The striking treatment seems to adhere Aristotle's definition of metaphor: literally the 'setting-before-the-eyes' of something (*Rhetoric*, 3.11.1411b, 'πρό ομμάτων ποιειν'/'pro ommaton poiein'). This was an important aspect of oratory, allowing practitioners to conjure actions for audiences in order to capture their attention and leading them to insight. Aristotle also wrote that metaphors must be taken from appropriate, but not obvious things, and that they should contain an element of deception (*Rhetoric*, 3.11.1411b). Although the Stagirite philosopher described the 'setting-before-the-eyes' in the context of the verbal arts, these ideas may apply to the visual as well; they stretch back to the very beginning of the Greek literary tradition, namely in the Homeric description of the shield of Achilles in the *Iliad*. By invoking pictures that 'talk' the Homeric Hephaestus forged a tradition of conceptualizing vision in terms of words and vice versa. Aristotle's 'setting-before-the-eyes' connotes not merely movement, but primarily living activity. Domenicos' *Boy* is not only in motion and animated –he blows the ember- but he is also fully actualised. He is depicted as a sentient being, engaging the viewers imaginatively, urging them to emotional responding. If all of these qualities raise the possibility of a deliberate engagement with a classical literary tradition, the unusual iconography of the *Boy* can also be linked, at least in part, to the formative influence of Fulvio and his learned circle.

The rarity of the subject and its unique execution has encouraged art historians to search for its pictorial prototypes, and it has often been related to a signed work by Jacopo and Francesco Bassano, which was in the Victor Spark collection in New York in 1948, and represented a boy who was blowing on an ember¹⁰⁷ (fig. 15). Despite the existence of this painting, it is hard to accept that the motif of the *Boy* was derived from Bassano. For one thing, Bassano's *Boy* was depicted in profile, while El Greco's is in a frontal position. Furthermore, the date on Bassano's picture, '157[]', with the last number illegible¹⁰⁸, suggests that it could have been painted at the same time as Domenicos', or even later. Nocturnal scenes of this type, with the source of illumination within the painting, were not new and had been produced by various

¹⁰⁷ W.R. Rearick, 'Jacopo Bassano's Later Genre Paintings', *The Burlington Magazine*, 110, 1968, pp. 241-249, esp. pp. 246-249.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, p. 246.

artists before Bassano and Domenicos¹⁰⁹, including Correggio and Giorgione. Nocturnal scenes and artificial lighting were also part of Titian's oeuvre, as demonstrated by his impressive *Martyrdom of St. Lawrence* (1547-1559, S. Maria Assunta, known as I Gesuiti, Venice). And they were also central to Raphael's *Liberation of St. Peter* (1511-1514) in the Stanza d' Eliodoro, and to Girolamo Muziano's *Rest on the Flight into Egypt* (1553-1554) in S. Caterina della Ruota, frescoes that clearly illustrate their masters' interests in luminous effects. Another possible source of inspiration may have been the *putto* on the right-hand side of Michelangelo's drawing of the *Archers Shooting at a Herm*, who is depicted in profile blowing on a fire (c.1530, Royal Library, Windsor Castle). It is indeed very likely that Domenicos studied this drawing, as it was in Farnese's possession by 1572¹¹⁰; he probably also knew a Greek silver medal with a similar subject in Fulvio's collection, which depicted three nymphs with a stone that was throwing fire¹¹¹. While all these visual sources of fire could have provided a starting point for the *Boy*, I would contend that knowledge of ancient texts was paramount to the conception of a painting such as this.

Indeed, the picture appears to reflect lessons learned from a variety of literary sources. Philostratus the Elder, for example, whose *Imagines* represented a guided tour through a gallery of paintings decorating a seaside villa near Naples¹¹², described night scenes with torches. In his account of Comus, revellers are enjoying themselves at night under their faint light¹¹³. Philostratus points to the difficulty in depicting shadows on one of the figures, which, he says, 'show a high degree of skill'¹¹⁴. In his opinion, it was through imitation that the painter could explore and understand nature.

¹⁰⁹ *El Greco: Mystery and Illumination*, exh. cat., ed. D. Davies, Edinburgh, 1989, p. 11.

¹¹⁰ Joannides, *Michelangelo and His Influence: Drawings from Windsor Castle*, pp. 75-77. An anonymous engraver after Michelangelo, who reproduced the *Archers* around 1546, may have been the source of inspiration for Bassano's *Boy blowing on a Firebrand*, once in the Spark collection.

¹¹¹ De Nollac, 'Les collections d'antiquités de Fulvio Orsini', p. 195, no 234.

¹¹² For Philostratus K. Lehmann-Hartleben, 'The Imagines of the Elder Philostratus', *The Art Bulletin*, 23, 1941, pp. 16-44; S.M. Beall, 'Word-Painting in the 'Imagines' of the Elder Philostratus', *Hermes*, 121, 1993, pp. 350-363; D. Shaffer, 'Ekphrasis and the Rhetoric of Viewing in Philostratus's Imaginary Museum', *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 31, 1998, pp. 303-316; the prototype, of course, of the literary *ekphrasis* was Homer's detailed description of the shield of Achilles in *Iliad*; S.L. Alpers, 'Ekphrasis and Aesthetic Attitudes in Vasari's *Lives*', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, xxiii, 1960, pp. 190-215.

¹¹³ Philostratus, *Imagines*, Book I. 2, pp. 9-13; Book II. 10, p. 173; Book II. 31, p. 259.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, Book II. 20, p. 221. Philostratus the Younger in his own *Imagines* writes in his description of Heracles in Swaddling Clothes that "night...is represented in human form; she is shedding a light upon herself with a torch"; Philostratus the Younger, *Imagines*, 5, 20, p. 309.

He conceived paintings as ‘complex literary narratives’¹¹⁵, and he praised the painter’s ability to imitate and deceive the spectator’s eyes in order to convey a hidden meaning: ‘How I have been deceived’, Philostratus exclaims in his description of the *Hunters*, ‘I was deluded by the painting into thinking that the figures were not painted but were real beings’¹¹⁶. In another description of his, *Pasiphaë*, Philostratus extolled the intellectual powers of the sculptor Daedalus, who was a man of great wisdom and keen intellect, and a master in verisimilitude¹¹⁷. Like the sophisticated Daedalus, Domenicos impresses with his ability to imitate nature, urging the spectator to interpret what is presented to him. As already touched upon, Domenicos believed that ‘the objective [of painting] is...the imitation’ of nature, and as painting ‘can judge all things’¹¹⁸, it enables us to pass from mere imitation to speculation and knowledge. The idea that a painter can judge all things with his eyes of reason, and therefore the idea that ‘painting is an intellectual art’¹¹⁹, suggests familiarity with Philostratus, who wrote in the Proemio of his *Imagines* that ‘art partakes of reason’ (‘λόγου η τέχνη άπτεται’)¹²⁰.

It is, however, in Pliny that we find the specific subject of the *Boy blowing on a fire* mentioned a total of three times: the first of these is an example by the sculptor Lycius, who executed ‘a Boy Blowing a Dying Fire that is worthy of his instructor’¹²¹. The second is a work by the painter Antiphilus of Alexandria, ‘who is praised for his Boy Blowing a Fire, and for the apartment, beautiful in itself, lit by the reflection from the fire and the light thrown on the boy’s face’¹²². Finally, Pliny says that the artist Philiscus also painted ‘a Painter’s Studio with a boy blowing the fire’¹²³. The most important of these artists was certainly Antiphilus (c.350-300BC), who worked in mythological and genre scenes (‘utraque’)¹²⁴, and whose paintings are

¹¹⁵ Shaffer, ‘Ekphrasis and the Rhetoric of Viewing in Philostratus’s Imaginary Museum’, p. 303.

¹¹⁶ Philostratus, *Imagines*, Book I. 28, p. 109.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, Book I. 16. 30, p. 65: “...about it [the workshop of Daedalus] are statues...others in a quite complete state in that they are already stepping forward and give promise of walking about...Daedalus himself is of the Attic type in that his face suggests great wisdom and that the look of the eye is so intelligent”; Beall, ‘Word-Painting in the Imagines of the Elder Philostratus’, pp. 359-361.

¹¹⁸ See above note 99.

¹¹⁹ Mariás & Bustamante, *Las ideas artisticas*, p. 80: “el Arte que tenga más dificultades será la más agradable y por consecuencia más intelectual”.

¹²⁰ Philostratus, *Imagines*, Book I.1, p. 3.

¹²¹ Pliny, Book XXXIV, xix, 79, p. 185.

¹²² *Ibid*, Book XXXV, xl, 138, p. 363.

¹²³ *Ibid*, Book XXXV, xl, 143, p. 365.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, Book XXXV, xxxvii, 114, p. 345; H. Rackham interprets the term ‘utraque’ as large and small pictures, but it could mean different techniques, such as encaustic and tempera or different types of paintings, such as mythological or genre scenes. This last interpretation seems to be the most probable

recorded in detail by Pliny¹²⁵. However, despite his artistic achievements, Antiphilus was best remembered by Renaissance artists for his slander against the painter Apelles of Kos. Antiphilus made his accusation to King Ptolemy IV of Egypt, claiming that Apelles had taken part in a conspiracy in Tyre¹²⁶. Defending himself to the king, Apelles proved his innocence, and the king compensated the artist with 100 talents and the right to take Antiphilus as a slave. As the compensation was not enough for Apelles, he decided to represent his experience in a painting. Pliny did not relate the anecdote of the calumny of Apelles, but Lucian described it in detail, in the manner of *ekphrasis*. Apelles' courage to defend himself in front of such a powerful king was much discussed in the Renaissance and made him a model for later painters¹²⁷. Domenicos was certainly very conscious of Apelles, the greatest of all ancient Greek painters, since, as we mentioned above, he had read Pliny's account of him, and he knew characteristic anecdotes about Apelles concerning his relations with other painters, such as Protogenes and Antiphilus. The latter was involved in the calumny of Apelles, as we shall discuss. Thus, it is not surprising that Domenicos underlined Vasari's relevant account of Apelles in his copy of the *Vite*¹²⁸.

In his picture of a *Boy Lighting a Candle*, Domenicos appears to have challenged Apelles in three areas: subject, likeness¹²⁹ and colour. According to Pliny, Apelles was so good that he 'even painted things that cannot be represented in pictures – thunder, lighting, and thunderbolts...' ¹³⁰, namely light. Domenicos' picture is similarly a composition of light, and it is tempting to see his experiments here in relation to other classical sources too. One ancient author who showed a particular interest in light was Ioannis Philoponus, in his commentary on Aristotle's *De anima*

because the variety of paintings listed by Pliny shows an artist who could paint both 'serious' and genre scenes. Moreover, Quintilian mentions that Antiphilus was praised for his 'facilitas', a term that means either 'rapidity of execution' or ability to execute pictures effortlessly; see for example, R.G. Austin, 'Quintilian on Painting and Statuary', *The Classical Quarterly*, 38, 1944, p. 20.

¹²⁵ Pliny, Book XXXV, xxxvii, 114, p. 345; xl, 138, p. 363.

¹²⁶ Lucian, *Slander: On not Being Quick to Put Faith in it*, Engl. transl. A.M. Harmon, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge Mass., [1913], reprinted 2006, vol. I, pp. 363-364: "Ptolemy, who in general was not particularly sound of judgment, but had been brought up in the midst of courtly flatter, was so inflamed and upset by this surprising charge that he did not take into account any of the probabilities, not considering either that the accuser was a rival or that a painter was too insignificant person for so great a piece of treason".

¹²⁷ Gage, 'A Locus Classicus of Colour Theory: The Fortunes of Apelles', pp. 1-26, esp. pp. 1, 10.

¹²⁸ Marías, *El Greco y el arte de su tiempo*, Greek transl., p. 72.

¹²⁹ Apelles was a master of verisimilitude; Pliny, Book XXXV, xxxvi, 88-89, p. 327.

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, Book XXXV, xxxvi, 96, p. 333.

(*On the Soul*)¹³¹. As mentioned in chapter 1, Philoponus' work was also found among the books of the Farnese library¹³². It is therefore possible that the painter was first introduced to a 'scientific' mentality, namely the investigation and representation of optical effects, in the Farnese household, where he could have consulted a copy of Philoponus' work. The fact that he later owned such a copy himself does suggest a theoretical interest in ancient theories of light, from Aristotle's exposition of the nature of light in his famous *De anima* (II, 7), to the last generation of Hellenistic philosophers. Like Aristotle, Philoponus argued that light is incorporeal, but contrary to the Stagirite, he conceived it not as a static phenomenon but as an 'active entity' ('*energeia*'), 'capable of propagation and susceptible of geometrical description, and which is emitted by luminous matter and can be intercepted on the surface of solid bodies'¹³³. The meticulous depiction of light in the *Boy* may well have been inspired by Pliny's accounts of Apelles' extraordinary feats of brush, but looking at it through the lens of Philoponus' light theory¹³⁴ can add another potential layer of understanding: the incorporeal light emitted from a luminous object – here, the ember- is intercepted by a solid body, the boy's face.

The notion that Domenicos was deliberately measuring himself against Apelles with this painting is compelling in other ways too. For instance, the picture is imposing in its limited palette, achieving extraordinary effects of naturalism and three-dimensionality, and recalling Apelles' much-discussed four colours: white, yellow ochre, red and black¹³⁵; blue is missing in Domenicos' *Boy*, as it was said to be missing in the work of Apelles¹³⁶. By taking up a restricted colour palette, which evoked comparison with the ancient painter, Domenicos appears to have been positioning himself as Apelles' modern rival, just as Mantegna, Dürer, and Titian had already done before him. In his copy of Vasari's *Vite* Domenicos would underline the passage that referred to Apelles' use of colours, and in particular the use of a 'brown

¹³¹ De Borja de San Román y Fernández, *El Greco en Toledo*, pp. 195-196, in *El Greco: Documents on His Life and Work*, pp. 273-274.

¹³² Formentin, 'Uno Scriptorium a Palazzo Farnese?', pp. 83-84.

¹³³ S. Sambursky, 'Philoponus' Interpretation of Aristotle's Theory of Light', *Osiris*, 13, 1958, pp. 114-126, esp. pp. 118, 125.

¹³⁴ For the opposite view see Davies, *El Greco: Mystery and Illumination*, p. 24: "The concept of pictorial light as a figure of spiritual illumination is fundamental to El Greco's painting of religious subjects".

¹³⁵ Pliny, Book, XXXV, xxxii, 50, p. 299.

¹³⁶ Gage, 'A Locus Classicus of Colour Theory: The Fortunes of Apelles', p. 5.

colour', or dark varnish, that enabled Apelles to temper his colours as he wished¹³⁷. And yet the literary reference for the motif of the boy blowing the fire is attributed to Antiphilus, and not to Apelles, which begs the question of why Domenicos chose to emulate a painter who was generally regarded in rather negative terms. Given the highly sophisticated circles in which the painting was produced, it is possible that he was encouraged to do so as a deliberate play on Pliny's accounts, and as a nod to the ideas of 'imitatio' and 'agon'.

In such circles, any reference to the ancient rivalry between Apelles and Antiphilus would have brought to mind the actions of one Domenicos' most important contemporary rivals in Rome, namely Federico Zuccaro. Supported by Giulio Clovio, Federico had become the chief painter at Caprarola after Taddeo's death in 1566¹³⁸, but things did not go well. In July 1569, Federico wrote to Cardinal Farnese saying that he would not return to Caprarola unless the cardinal gave him 300 *scudi* for the dowry of his sister, which was owed to him and Taddeo after ten years of service¹³⁹. It seems that the cardinal was willing to give him the money, but only if Federico accepted the condition that he would return 200 *scudi* if he left his service, or if the cardinal chose to terminate the agreement¹⁴⁰. Federico apparently did not accept these terms and, irritated and outraged, he left Caprarola. Comparing himself to Apelles, Federico devised the *Calumny of Apelles* (fig. 16) because he thought he had been treated unfairly by the cardinal¹⁴¹. The image survives in two paintings (c. 1569, Palazzo Caetani, Rome & Hampton Court, London), two drawings (Kunsthalle,

¹³⁷ Marías, *El Greco y el arte de su tiempo*, Greek transl., p. 72; Pliny, Book XXXV, xxxvi, 97, p. 333.

¹³⁸ Robertson, *Il Gran Cardinale*, p. 105.

¹³⁹ Partridge, 'The Sala d'Ercole in the Villa Farnese at Caprarola: Part I', p. 470, note 20.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 470, note 20. Strinati, on the other hand, attributed Federico's dismissal to the painter's haste to prove his own value as an artist, first reacting against his brother's artistic dominance and later against Cardinal Farnese who was attempting to control him; Strinati, 'Gli anni difficili di Federico Zuccari', p. 93. Later, Partridge found interesting Strinati's psychological interpretation that the real reason for Zuccaro being fired from the Caprarola project was part and parcel of the painter's character, who probably loathed running a large workshop and working in speed according to the cardinal's wishes; L. Partridge, 'Federico Zuccari at Caprarola, 1561-1569: The Documentary and Graphic Evidence', in *Der Maler Federico Zuccari: Ein römischer Virtuoso von europäischem Ruhm, Akten des internationalen Kongresses der Bibliotheca Hertziana*, Rome & Florence, 23-26 Febr. 1993, Munich, 1999, p. 182, notes 61, 62.

¹⁴¹ I. Gerards-Nelissen, 'Federigo Zuccaro and the Lament of Painting', *Simiolus*, 13, 1983, p. 53, where the allegories of the *Calumny of Apelles*, the *Lament of Painting* and *Porta Virtutis* have been interpreted as testimonies of Federico's ideas about art. Oversensitive and irritable, Federico attributed his artistic failures either to his patrons' ignorance or to his peers' envy; D. Cast, *The Calumny of Apelles: A Study in the Humanist Tradition*, New Haven & London, 1981, p. 133; C. Strinati, 'Gli anni difficili di Federico Zuccari', *Storia dell' arte*, 21, 1974, pp. 93-94.

Hamburg & Christ Church, Oxford) (fig. 17) and several engravings¹⁴². The notion that Federico's allegory was a reply to Farnese was first suggested in 1582 by the resident ambassador for Urbino in Rome, Baldo Falcucci, in a letter to the Duke of Urbino, Francesco Maria II Della Rovere¹⁴³. While the cardinal had apparently reacted mildly to Federico's *Calumny*¹⁴⁴, the 1572 engraving after Federico by Cornelis Cort¹⁴⁵ may well have brought the topic to the forefront of people's minds once more around the time that Domenicos was executing his painting.

The prime motivation for the creation of Zuccaro's *Calumny*, like that of Apelles, was to censure envy, hatred and artistic rivalry. According to Lucian's reading, these feelings were aroused by 'ignorance' that keeps us in the dark, 'envelops things in a fog...and obscures the truth'¹⁴⁶, so that 'the real character of each of us is shrouded in darkness'¹⁴⁷. It is, therefore, the truth that we should search for. The truth will, eventually, illuminate everything, dissolve the shadows of ignorance and outweigh it. It is tempting to find an echo of Lucian's words in Domenicos' *Boy*, which could be seen as a re-working of an ancient painting by Apelles' rival, Antiphilus. Perhaps this was Domenicos' way of setting himself up in competition with Federico, who had self-consciously compared himself to Apelles. If we are being invited to read the painting in relation to the *Calumny*, the darkness around the figure of the boy should be seen as denoting ignorance, which the light coming from the ember will eventually disperse. As the boy blowing on the ember illuminates the space around him, similarly the light of truth could be seen as dissolving the darkness of ignorance and misjudgement. In this way, the *Boy* could serve as a pictorial metaphor that unveils the sophisticated idea of the truth illuminating error.

That the *Boy* may also involve a more complex, allegorical interpretation, which depends on the spectators' learning, may be further supported by Domenicos' other mysterious picture, the *Fabula* (Museo del Prado) (fig. 18), which exists in three

¹⁴² Acidini Luchinat, *Taddeo e Federico Zuccari*, vol. II, pp. 32-37, figs. 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, where the author believes that the Hampton Court painting is earlier than the Caetani picture, (*ibid*, vol. II, pp. 35, 36).

¹⁴³ *Ibid*, vol. II, p. 41, note 77.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*, vol. II, p. 41, note 77: "...il S.or Cardinale se ben se la prese in burla".

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, vol. II, pp. 35, 41, note 67.

¹⁴⁶ Lucian, *Slander*, 1, p. 361.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 32, p. 393.

versions¹⁴⁸. In this work, a boy placed between a monkey and a bearded figure, a fool, is trying to light a candle against a dark background. While many suggestive insights have resulted from the investigation of the painting's relation with proverbs and popular sayings, either Spanish or Italian¹⁴⁹, the scholarly context of the Farnese court suggests another possible reading. This can be found in the Aristotelian theory of virtue as the mean between two extremes, excess and deficiency¹⁵⁰, with the monkey representing Envy or Deception, while the bearded man is Foolishness. Although monkeys were sometimes associated with the vice of lust¹⁵¹, in ancient Greek literature the animal is synonymous with deception¹⁵². The Greek rhetoricians, Aeschines and Demosthenes in particular used the word 'monkey', *pithicos*, to characterise their opponent as a sycophant¹⁵³; in Aristophanes, too, a sycophant is called 'monkey'¹⁵⁴. It is possible therefore that by positioning the boy between two vices, excess/envy and deficiency/foolishness, Domenicos was representing the mean, the virtue of wisdom or prudence. Evidence of the painter's interest in the Aristotelian theory of virtues, and with the virtue of prudence in particular, can be found in his annotations on Vitruvius, where he was engrossed in the notion of 'prudence' to such a degree that he equated the art of painting itself with 'prudence'¹⁵⁵. The fact that the Cretan depicted the same principal figure in the *Boy Lighting a Candle* and the *Fabula* suggests that he intended the boy as a symbol of the same idea, possibly the *exemplum* of prudence, which illuminates the darkness of ignorance by the light of truth.

If Domenicos was creating allegories drawn from classical sources, Fulvio would be his most obvious guide, as the Roman scholar was certainly well-versed in Aristotelian moral theory. His friend Paolo Giovio, who was strongly influenced by

¹⁴⁸ A version, dated c.1587-1596, is now at the National Gallery of Scotland, and another one is in the collection of Earl of Harewood in Yorkshire (c.1577-8); for the different interpretations of the picture see *El Greco: Identity and Transformation*, p. 397, no 43.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p. 397.

¹⁵⁰ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book II, pp. 70-115.

¹⁵¹ Davies, *El Greco: Mystery and Illumination*, pp. 20-21.

¹⁵² C. Connors, 'Monkey Business: Imitation, Authenticity, and Identity from Pithekoussai to Plautus', *Classical Antiquity*, 23, 2004, pp. 179-207, esp. pp. 184-189.

¹⁵³ *Ibid*, p. 188.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p. 189; also in Plautus' comedies monkeys are "associated with the practices of sycophancy...sycophantic behaviour and monkey business is linked together", (*ibid*, p. 192). As mentioned in ch. 1, El Greco owned a copy of Aristophanes.

¹⁵⁵ See ch. 1; Marías & Bustamante, *Las ideas artísticas*, p. 165: "...la pintura tiene un puesto de prudencia...".

Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, had left a 'sketch for a project'¹⁵⁶ illustrating the Aristotelian virtues and vices by means of examples drawn from ancient and contemporary history. Fulvio himself had many editions of Aristotle¹⁵⁷, books of Greek rhetoricians and Aristophanes in his library, some of which he annotated¹⁵⁸, and he could easily recall relevant passages in Valerius Maximus, Apuleius, Strabo, Aulus Gellius and others. He also owned editions of Philostratus, as well as writings by Lucian, and Pliny¹⁵⁹, so he would have been well placed to help Domenicos to synthesize ancient authorities into a work of his own, and act as a mediator between the painter and the ancient world. As we have seen, Domenicos owned many of the same books as Orsini¹⁶⁰, and we cannot exclude the possibility that some of the books listed in his inventory once belonged to his learned friend. One imagines that Domenicos received Orsini's teachings on Aristotle and his moral theory with enthusiasm, given the evidence of his library. His orientation, however, according to his annotations, was stripped of scholastic commentaries and speculative moral-theological questions, and affirmed the value of individual experience and practical wisdom instead.

As a highly sophisticated picture, the *Boy Lighting a Candle* displays both Domenicos' skill in re-inventing a lost masterpiece mentioned by Pliny and his ability to unite text and image, learning and art. Fulvio's connoisseurship and erudition are also on view in such a painting, which suggests the interrelated themes of 'agon' and 'paragone' and suggests Domenicos' aspiration to respond both to his classical predecessors and to contemporary rivals. The implicit allusions to an array of ancient Greek authors, such as Demosthenes, Aristophanes, Philostratus, Aristotle, and Philoponus, all familiar to Fulvio, point to a friendship that bound him and Domenicos tightly together.

¹⁵⁶ Price Zimmerman, *Paolo Giovio*, p. 273.

¹⁵⁷ See ch. 1, notes 89, 90.

¹⁵⁸ De Nolhac, *La Bibliothèque*, pp. 351, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, esp. nos 59, 76, 98.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 352, nos 20, 21, 22; p. 354, nos 43, 46; p. 382, nos 5, 6, 7; p. 384, no 33; p. 385, no 49.

¹⁶⁰ De Borja de San Román y Fernández, *El Greco en Toledo*, pp. 195-196, in *El Greco: Documents on His Life and Work*, pp. 273-274.

Chapter 6: Palazzo Farnese and Beyond

Domenicos' Roman sojourn presents a perplexing situation. As he resided in the Farnese Palace and lived in close proximity to its owner, he gradually would have become part of the cardinal's household, which guaranteed a number of benefits. He would have had access, as mentioned earlier, to the large collection of antique and contemporary art housed there, and he would have come into close contact with the scholars in the cardinal's service. Fulvio Orsini in particular would have provided a lens through which to see antiquity, and the sophistication of Fulvio's revival of classical antiquity clearly appealed to the Cretan. Creating a number of finished works of art during his stay in the cardinal's palace, the painter appears to have been biding his time patiently, hoping to activate the cardinal's interest and waiting for an opportunity to win his favour. Yet he was probably never directly involved with work for the Farnese, or entrusted with any part of the decoration of cardinal's newly-built palace in Caprarola.

Clare Robertson has suggested that Domenicos failed in this ambition because, while Cardinal Farnese was looking for painters to work in fresco, offering 'vast areas of wall space rapidly frescoed with elaborate iconographical cycles, both secular and religious'¹, Domenicos was more interested in the expressive possibilities of the oil technique, and therefore more experienced in oil than in fresco². One wonders, however, whether it was only the lack of technical ability that prevented Domenicos from participating in the cardinal's decorative programmes. While the conditions of his admittance to the Farnese household are not clear, we can assume that the painter would not have turned down a commission had his potential patron decided to offer him one. And it is true that to belong, or to aspire to belong, to a cardinal's 'famiglia' certainly entailed a series of obligations, including working in different media, such as fresco and oil. Another possible explanation for Domenicos' absence from the Farnese projects was that the cardinal 'preferred to employ painters who had already acquired a reputation by working for other Roman patrons'³, such as Cardinal Ippolito d' Este (1509-1572)⁴, or Cardinal Gianfrancesco Gambara (d. 1587). Indeed, a sense of rivalry between the above cardinals seems to have motivated several important

¹ Robertson, 'El Greco, Fulvio Orsini and Giulio Clovio', p. 224.

² *Ibid.*, p. 224.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

projects, including the decoration of the Villa d'Este in Tivoli, the Palazzo Farnese at Caprarola and the Villa Lante at Bagnaia⁵, which kept a large number of artists busy. Clearly Domenicos did not belong in the category of painters who had been working for the above prelates, but he had established a reputation as a talented painter, according to Clovio's letter of November 1570. And he was certainly more gifted than many of the large number of artists who were employed to decorate the Oratory of the Gonfalone and the Farnese villa at Caprarola. Why, then, did he not take part in these projects, particularly if he had acquired a certain fame and the support of a key Farnese adviser? Did the opportunity not arise?

Jobs did occasionally come up and many artists were vying for the chance to work on a prestigious commission. The example of the Oratory of the Gonfalone (1568-1584) is telling in this respect since a number of artists as diverse as the well-known Federico Zuccaro⁶, Jacopo Bertoja, Livio Agresti da Forli (c.1508-c.1580), the unknown Marcantonio del Forno (fl. 1575), and the obscure Giacomo Rocca, were all eager to be employed on this commission⁷. Domenicos surely heard talk of the frescoes painted in the Gonfalone, since the Oratory was situated in Via del Gonfalone, off Via Giulia, only five minutes' walk from Palazzo Farnese; perhaps he was even permitted to visit it before its completion, as the cardinal-protector of the confraternity was Alessandro Farnese. Moreover, since it was during this period that Domenicos was occupied with the depiction of nocturnal scenes, including the *Boy Lighting a Candle* and *Fabula*, he would have been perfectly capable of painting similar night scenes in the Gonfalone, such as the *Agony in the Garden* (c.1571)⁸. As

⁵ See for example, D.R. Coffin, 'Some Aspects of the Villa Lante at Bagnaia' in *Arte in Europa: Scritti di storia dell'arte in onore di Edoardo Arslan*, Milan, 1966, vol. I, p. 573. Cardinal Gambara, who was Farnese's good friend, often assumed the role of artistic consultant for him.

⁶ Federico painted the *Flagellation of Christ* and the attic zone above in 1573; B.L. Wollesen-Wisch, 'The Archiconfraternita del Gonfalone and Its Oratory in Rome: Art and Counter-Reformation Spiritual Values', Ph.D. thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1985, pp. 183-206.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 165, where Livio Agresti is argued to have painted two scenes: the *Last Supper* (mid-1570 to mid-1571) and the *Way to Calvary* (second half of 1571) along with the attic zones above; see also F. Spazzoli, 'Livio Agresti: attualità di un piccolo maestro', *Studi Romagnoli*, xxiii, 1972, pp. 76, 79, fig. 8; Marcantonio del Forno painted the *Arrest of Christ* (second half of 1572), Wollesen-Wisch, 'The Archiconfraternita del Gonfalone and Its Oratory in Rome', pp. 207-212; and Giacomo Rocca the *Deposition from the Cross* (c. 1575), (*ibid.*, pp. 260-264), where Wollesen-Wisch questioned the attribution of the *Deposition* to Giacomo Rocca; see also N. Turner, 'A Drawing Attributed to Giacomo Rocca', *Master Drawings*, 28, 1990, pp. 268-274.

⁸ Röttgen and Partridge seem to have agreed that it was Giovanni de' Vecchi the painter of the *Agony in the Garden* at Gonfalone, but Wollesen-Wisch saw a number of problems in this attribution, Wollesen-Wisch, 'The Archiconfraternita del Gonfalone and Its Oratory in Rome', pp. 180-181; H. Röttgen, 'Christ on the Mount of Olives by Giuseppe Cesari', *Bulletin of the Allen Memorial Art Museum*, xxviii, 1970, p. 12, note 16.

Bertoja had already left Rome for Parma in November 1570, there was also a vacancy in both the decoration of the palace at Caprarola and the decoration of the Gonfalone⁹, which Domenicos could have filled. The continuous delays to work on the Gonfalone, first in July 1569 and then again in July 1572, when Bertoja came back to Rome to complete the Prophet and Sibyl above the *Arrest of Christ* in the Oratory¹⁰, must have caused disappointment to the confraternity. Its members did not complain, however, probably because they felt unable to react actively by hiring another painter against the decisions of the powerful Cardinal Farnese¹¹. Domenicos, who was in the cardinal's household from late 1570 until July 1572, would have been a convenient solution for both the cardinal and the *confratelli*. Clovio, who had recommended him to the cardinal, may have encouraged Domenicos to take advantage of the absence of Bertoja and become the next distinguished court painter. The substitution of one lead artist for another had already occurred many times on these projects, with Federico Zuccaro replacing his brother at Caprarola, Bertoja replacing Federico after the latter's withdrawal from the decoration of the palace in 1569¹², while Raffaellino da Reggio later replacing Bertoja in the decoration of the Gonfalone, in 1574¹³.

It is unlikely that El Greco was oblivious to these possibilities, and yet he failed to smooth his way towards the Gonfalone. There was, however, still the decoration of Caprarola, where he could have taken full advantage of the situation and presented himself as the new chief painter of the project. But he did not. The following analysis

⁹ Bertoja had already arrived in Parma on November 24 1570; DeGrazia, *Bertoia, Mirola and the Farnese Court*, Bologna, 1991, p. 30; Robertson, *Il Gran Cardinale*, p. 178; K. Oberhuber, 'Jacopo Bertoia im Oratorium von S. Lucia Del Gonfalone in Rom', *Römische Historische Mitteilungen*, 3, 1958-59, pp. 239-254; K. Andrews, 'Jacopo Zanguidi, called Bertoia', *The Burlington Magazine*, 106, 1964, pp. 463-467.

¹⁰ DeGrazia, *Bertoia, Mirola and the Farnese Court*, pp. 30, 51, Appendix I, pp. 291-292, where Bertoja complained on April 26, 1572 in a letter addressed to Giovanni Battista Pico about the lack of facilities of his room at Palazzo Farnese in Via Giulia; Wollesen-Wisch, 'The Archiconfraternita del Gonfalone and Its Oratory in Rome', pp. 124-125. It has been argued that Bertoja returned to Rome in December 1571, when he painted the attic zone above the still unpainted *Arrest of Christ* in the Gonfalone, (*ibid*, p. 164); Partridge, 'The Sala d' Ercole in the Villa Farnese at Caprarola, Part II', p. 57, notes 149, 151, where the author suggests that Bertoja began work at Caprarola in July 1569, he returned to Parma on November 24, 1570 and on April 26, 1572, Bertoja was back to Rome again. It was probably then that Bertoja met Domenicos, as they moved in the same circle, and lived in the same palace. We know that Bertoja was working in the Gonfalone in July 1572 and later that summer at Caprarola; Robertson, *Il Gran Cardinale*, p. 116.

¹¹ Wollesen-Wisch, 'The Archiconfraternita del Gonfalone and Its Oratory in Rome', pp. 125-127, where the author argues that Cardinal Farnese suggested Bertoja to the confraternity without the confraternity being able to refuse.

¹² *Ibid*, p. 125: Ludovico Tedesco mentioned that on July 18, 1569 Bertoja left Rome for Caprarola to replace Federico Zuccaro as head of the villa decoration.

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 214. It seems that Giovanni de' Vecchi's cut-throat competition with Raffaellino da Reggio, which was developed during their work at the Sala del Mappamondo at Caprarola in 1574, further spurred the cardinal to reach this decision, (*ibid*).

will suggest that Domenicos' failure to advance his career under Farnese's protection was not wholly attributable to his inexperience in the medium of fresco, or to his being relatively unknown among the wealthy patrons of Rome.

As discussed earlier, El Greco's output was relatively small during his first two years in Rome, but it was highly sophisticated, which suggests that he spent a considerable amount of time and effort on these paintings. Indeed, as I have argued, it seems likely that his *Boy* was created to please the cardinal and the habitués of the Farnese Palace, by emulating a lost work by an ancient master, known to them only through Pliny's accounts. Yet the ultimate paradigm was not Antiphilus, but Apelles, who was generally lauded for his verisimilitude, light and grace. And I think it was these legendary skills of Apelles that Domenicos sought to emulate, rather than just an ancient subject –as was the case with the *Calumny of Apelles*, for instance, which Zuccaro had deliberately tackled, or the *Venus Anadyomene* that Titian had referenced with his image of *Venus* (1520) in the National Gallery of Scotland. The talent that Domenicos had sought to publicise, first with his *Self-portrait* and then with his *Boy*, coupled with his Greek background, meant that he was especially well-placed to emulate the fame of the ancient painter. What is more, with the benefit of hindsight we know that Domenicos, who proudly called the ancients his 'forefathers', believed that the Greek painters could be surpassed because art continued to make progress from ancient to modern times¹⁴.

If indeed, as I believe, El Greco was making a correlation between himself and Apelles, he would have been fully aware of how well equipped an artist needed to be to stake such a claim. Pliny specifically recorded the high standards of training and education of Greek painters. When discussing Apelles' teacher, Pamphilus, for instance, he stressed that he was 'highly educated in all branches of learning, especially arithmetic and geometry'¹⁵. Thus, to outdo his rivals, classical and contemporary, Domenicos needed a complex professional profile with certain cultural pretensions, a public identity which would prove that he was not just another portrait painter of the Titian school, as he had been presented by Clovio. Indeed, it seems that he aspired to be considered a learned painter in the Ligorian vein, a truly versatile

¹⁴ Marías & Bustamante, *Las ideas artísticas*, pp. 156-157: "...no tengo tanta inclinación por lo mío como la que [muestra] Vitruvio en el capítulo anterior por su patria...las artes aumentan y crecen por medio del tiempo..."; Theotokopoulos, 'Annotations on Vitruvius' De architectura', in *Tetradia Eftthinis*, pp. 96-137, esp. pp. 130-131.

¹⁵ Pliny, Book XXV, xxxvi, 76, p. 317.

artist who could carry on the ancient artistic tradition of Apelles. And as we have seen, no one understood this better than Fulvio Orsini, the scholar who was most advantageously positioned to acknowledge the Cretan's talent and his extraordinary artistic personality. Domenicos, like Apelles, who had won the respect of Alexander the Great with his virtuosity, had all the pre-requisites to impress the illustrious Alessandro Farnese.

Yet the cardinal appears to have set different priorities when selecting his painters. When Bertoja left Rome in autumn 1570, Farnese was probably looking for a painter who could heed his commands and complete the decoration of his villa quickly and inexpensively. Whether this means that Cardinal Farnese was not a sophisticated patron¹⁶, it is difficult to say. Once the pattern of the decoration at Caprarola had been set by Taddeo, later artists had only to complete the remaining parts following Zuccaro's ideas. The overall impression is that of a unified ensemble, in which different hands can hardly be identified. The ability to work according to a given design programme, and most importantly, to finish it speedily were presumably two of the most important criteria that artists had to meet if they were to join the Caprarola project. The case of Vasari, who completed the decoration of the Sala della Cancelleria in one hundred days is telling, and so is that of Salviati, who was probably chosen by Cardinal Farnese for the decoration of the Farnese chapel in the Cancelleria due to his *facilità* and *prestezza*, namely his ability to work fast¹⁷. To meet the constraints of time both Salviati and Vasari were compelled to use and re-use the same stock figures in different pictorial contexts, a working method that often led to bizarre and unbalanced compositions¹⁸. Notably, Vasari, who considered the rapidity of execution a positive value, wrote in the Preface of the third part of his *Vite* that painting had reached such perfection that while old masters had taken six years to paint a picture, his fellow artists were able to paint six panels in a year¹⁹. In the same vein, Alessandro Farnese did not like to waste time. In a letter written in 1569, the

¹⁶ De Hollanda, *Diálogos em Roma* (1538), p. 107: "...like Cardinal Farnese, who does not know what painting is and yet gave the same Perino [del Vaga] a very fair salary..."; Partridge, 'Discourse of Asceticism in Bertoja's Room Of Penitence in the Villa Farnese at Caprarola', p. 159: "[Cardinal Farnese] was not noted for contrition or piety, and, as his dependence on another cardinal for the program of the room [Room of Penitence] amply demonstrates, he was no scholar...".

¹⁷ P. Rubin, 'The Private Chapel of Cardinal Alessandro Farnese in the Cancelleria, Rome', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, I, 1987, pp. 87-112, esp. p. 90.

¹⁸ A. Nova, 'Salviati, Vasari and the Reuse of Drawings in their Working Practice', *Master Drawings*, 30, 1992, pp. 83-108.

¹⁹ Vasari, *Vite*, vol. IV, Proemio, p. 13: "...dove prima da que' nostri maestri si faceva una tavola in sei anni, oggi in un anno ne fanno sei".

cardinal urged his majordomo, Count Lodovico Tedesco, to send Federico Zuccaro to Caprarola to move the decoration along as quickly as possible²⁰. Undoubtedly, this working method had a negative effect on both the quality of the work and the status of the painters' profession, as many of them did routine, and now largely anonymous, work.

The ideal of 'doctus pictore' on the other hand entailed a certain reluctance to execute works quickly, since this kind of painting demanded both intellectual and manual activity. The Parma *Healing of the Blind* and the *Boy Lighting a Candle* by El Greco, both listed in the Farnese inventories, were highly finished works, and the latter in particular was intended to be read as a recondite allegory. In this respect, haste was contrary to sophistication. In his *postille* to Vasari's *Vite*, and particularly in the biography of Perino del Vaga, Domenicos appears deeply preoccupied with the amount of time spent on a work and the possibility that the organization of a big workshop may lead to low quality²¹. In fact, the attempt of Perino del Vaga to monopolise the Roman market by offering to execute important commissions for less money, underrating in this way himself and the art of painting, aroused El Greco's outrage²². Moreover, he severely criticised Vasari when the latter admitted that it was a mistake to use so many assistants in the decoration of the Sala dei Cento Giorni, and called him an 'idiot and without taste' ('mentecanto y sin ningún gusto')²³. On this issue Domenicos seems to have agreed with Leonardo, Michelangelo and Federico Zuccaro²⁴, who deplored the errors made through rapidity. In the *Diálogos em Roma*, Francisco de Hollanda asked Michelangelo whether it was better to work quickly or slowly, and Michelangelo replied that quickness should not deceive the painter and make him forget his principle task, which was perfection. While the result should appear effortless, the painter should take his time: 'the important thing is that it should seem done very easily, although it has cost hard work'²⁵. As recounted by De Hollanda, Michelangelo is clearly making a distinction between rapidity, *prestezza*,

²⁰ Partridge, 'The Sala d'Ercole in the Villa Farnese at Caprarola: Part I', p. 470, note 20: "Noi desideriamo di haver quà Federigo [Zuccaro] Pittore per tirare inanti l'opere che egli ha cominciato con più celerità che sia possibile...".

²¹ Marías, *El Greco y el arte de su tiempo*, Greek transl., pp. 70-71.

²² *Ibid*, p. 71: "mejor se conocerá por lo que parece el que le escribe la vida [...] que tampoco pira [...] que pone en vida de pintores semejantes bajezas, yo me pasmo de que los que saben pintar, que no caigan en semejantes vilezas y simplicidades".

²³ *Ibid*, pp. 74, 146.

²⁴ R. Williams, 'The Artist as Worker in Sixteenth-Century Italy', in *Taddeo and Federico Zuccaro, Artist-Brothers in Renaissance Rome*, p. 97.

²⁵ De Hollanda, *Diálogos em Roma (1538)*, pp. 114-115.

and effortless deftness, a quality that echoes Castiglione's *sprezzatura*, which was understood as studied carelessness or nonchalance.

Indeed, *prestezza* or rapid execution, which was much discussed by sixteenth-century writers as diverse as Ludovico Dolce and Armenini, entailed low-paid artists succumbing to the pressure of patrons to finish a job quickly, without devoting more time than necessary to a single work²⁶. Ancient authors provided a schematic but comprehensive answer to this issue. Plutarch's anecdote of the unworthy painter who shows one of his masterpieces to Apelles announcing proudly that he had completed within a brief time was well known; as was Apelles' reply: 'Even should you not say so, yet I know that it was painted hastily'²⁷. Time could be seen to quantify artistic quality, and quality could determine the price. Pliny recorded both the privileges awarded to important artists²⁸, and examples of painters who had demanded high fees for their paintings. Among these were Apelles and Parrhasius, who painted a picture that was valued at 6,000,000 sesterces²⁹. It appears that Domenicos was aware of the social position of artists in the Graeco-Roman world, and the fees they were paid, since he underlined the report in Vasari that Apelles was paid twenty talents in gold for the portrait of Alexander the Great in the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus³⁰. This may also suggest that he agreed with, or at least was impressed by, the high prices Apelles demanded for his works. If he did equate artistic value with economic reward, he seems to have sided with those who embraced the ideal of Apelles rather than with that of the impoverished Protogenes³¹. An especially revealing indication of his attitude towards this issue can be seen in his artistic output in Toledo, where he not only demanded surprisingly high prices, but he was also reluctant to comply with his

²⁶ Spear, 'Rome: Setting the Stage', in *Painting for Profit*, p. 65: "speed of execution had another financial dimension: satisfying a buyer by delivering on time and gaining a reputation of being available".

²⁷ Plutarch, *Moralia, The Education of Children*, Engl. transl. F. Cole Babbitt, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge Mass., 1927, vol. I, vii, p. 31.

²⁸ Pliny, Book, XXXV, xxxv, 59, pp. 305-306: Polygnotus, for example, "was held in higher esteem, as the Amphictyones, who are a General Council of Greece, voted him entertainment at the public expense".

²⁹ *Ibid*, Book, XXXV, xxxvi, 70, p. 313.

³⁰ Mariás, *El Greco y el arte de su tiempo*, Greek transl., p. 72; also Pliny, Book XXXV, xxxvi, 90-92, pp. 329-330: "the artist received the price of this picture in gold coin measured by weight, not counted".

³¹ Sohm, 'Introduction', in *Painting for Profit*, pp. 4-5: "By the late sixteenth century, two conflicting views about the monetary motivations of artists coexisted. Pragmatists like Vasari accepted the fact that artists struggled to earn a living... On the other side stood the idealists who believed that money corrupts and poverty purifies. They took Protogenes as their model for the artistic virtues of poverty".

patrons' demands whenever they asked for changes in his artistic designs³². Like his ancestors, it seems that Domenicos considered his art to be of high quality and worthy of a very high price.

This suggests he would not have been eager to work quickly, on a design programme already established by the Zuccari and Bertoja, which may explain why he was not employed at Caprarola, even though he visited the palace. Cardinal Farnese appears to have been content to get the job done quickly and easily, rather than seeking to appoint new blood. When Vignola died in 1573, for instance, he used the services of his chief mason, Giovanni Antonio Garzoni da Viggiú³³ to complete the architecture of the villa, even though there were well-known candidates who were ready to accept such a responsibility, including Pirro Ligorio, Annibale Lippi, Lorenzo Pomarelli and Giacomo della Porta. On the other hand, payments to artists in the Farnese service indicate that the cardinal was not particularly generous as a patron. For example, Giulio Clovio was paid 10 *scudi* per month in 1543 and his salary rose to 11 *scudi* a month after twenty-four years, in 1567 (although he was given accommodation as part of his employment)³⁴. Vignola, Farnese's favourite architect, received 16 *scudi* a month in late 1560s, while Ligorio 10³⁵, and Bertoja was paid only 12 *scudi* per month in 1569 and 15 *scudi* in 1572³⁶. Unlike these artists, El Greco probably never set a price with Farnese, perhaps assuming to be forthcoming given the great wealth and social standing of the cardinal. It is also possible, however, that he offered his paintings as gifts; perhaps aspiring to Zeuxis' habit of making gifts of his paintings, as recounted by Pliny the Elder³⁷. I, therefore, suggest that he deliberately sought to connect his works to these of ancient painters, and that he hoped to prove that he did not earn a living by manual labour; instead he wanted the cardinal to appreciate his art as an intellectual endeavour, parallel to the culture and high aesthetic of the collections at Palazzo Farnese. As Ligorio would later write, the man 'who came to Rome from overseas' aspired 'to show that he is

³² The *Disrobing of Christ* in the Toledo Cathedral, is one of the many examples that can support our argument, R.L. Kagan, 'El Greco and the Law', *Studies in the History of Art*, 11, 1982, pp. 79-90; R.L. Kagan, 'The Toledo of El Greco', in *El Greco of Toledo*, pp. 61-72.

³³ Robertson, *Il Gran Cardinale*, p. 88.

³⁴ Clovio was not particularly happy with his salary, *ibid*, pp. 30, 90, 254 note 116.

³⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 90, 254 note 116. Taddeo was the only artist who had received for his work the exceptional salary of sixteenth and a half *scudi* per month in 1561, probably because he was in demand during this period in Rome. Evidently reputation affected prices.

³⁶ DeGrazia, *Bertoia, Mirola and the Farnese Court*, pp. 65-66, note 130; Wollesen-Wisch, 'The Archiconfraternita del Gonfalone and Its Oratory in Rome', pp. 125-126.

³⁷ Pliny, Book, XXXV, xxxvi, 62, p. 309.

doing something'³⁸. However, what he was doing failed to serve Farnese's immediate artistic plans, and so he was left out of the most important commissions of the early 1570s. As a result, his career prospects were in jeopardy. His expulsion from the Farnese Palace in the summer of 1572, therefore, was hardly surprising, despite his alleged bewilderment. A great chance had been lost.

Dismissal

Despite initial hopes of a successful career, Domenicos' stay at Palazzo Farnese was short and unavailing. A signed letter by the painter himself, which came to light from the Farnese archives in Parma and is dated July 6 1572, informs us that Domenicos was forced to leave the palace on Cardinal Farnese's instructions. The letter does not provide us with new information, but it confirms the initial speculation that Domenicos was eventually expelled from the Farnese Palace late in the summer of 1572. Yet, the letter is important because it is the only autographed document by Domenicos from this period that has come to light. Crucially, of course, it also confirms that Clovio's request of November 1570, that the Cretan should be afforded accommodation at Palazzo Farnese, had been satisfied. And it is interesting that the painter here communicated directly with Alessandro Farnese, rather than through his 'majordomo', which suggests at least some level of familiarity between the two. In doing so, Domenicos was following in the footsteps of his fellow artist Federico Zuccaro, who had also defied Cardinal Farnese a few years before³⁹. Unlike Zuccaro, however, El Greco lacked the great advantage of working as chief painter on one of Farnese's projects. Although we do not know what motivated him to write this letter, he attempts to pressure the cardinal into revoking the decision to dismiss him, by underlining his talent, his integrity and his loyalty to the Farnese family:

Most Illustrious and Reverent, Honourable Lord

Immediately after the departure of your Excellency, Count Ludovico [Tedesco], who is in charge of your house, dismissed me, acting, as he says, on your behalf. I cannot stop tormenting myself, having been called to your service by your kindness, who always supports all those who are worthy of being numbered among your family, due to the excellence and the rarity of some of [their] qualities, even though I did not

³⁸ Coffin, 'Pirro Ligorio on the Nobility of the Arts', p. 203, note 48: "di parere di far qualche cosa".

³⁹ Partridge, 'The Sala d'Ercole in the Villa Farnese at Caprarola: Part I', p. 470, note 20.

think myself of being worthy of such honour. And examining and minutely inspecting myself, I do not think I am worthy of being treated in this way, knowing myself as a man who did not ask from your Excellency such a favour, nor did I deserve to be thrown out and sent away in such a manner, as I had committed no fault. As I said, I do not find any cause or reason for having deserved this humiliation, [and] I would be very happy to know the reason [for it] for my own comfort, and for the people who will be very surprised; and since it is false, to prove it before your Excellency, as a man who prized my honour. I am ready to obey your instructions for this as for anything else, leaving these few lines as testimony of the willingness and loyalty of my soul, as long as I live, to your name and to your most illustrious house, for which I pray to God [to give] every happiness and glory.

Rome July 6, 1572

The most humble and devoted servant of your Most Illustrious and Reverent Lordship

Domenico Teotocopuli⁴⁰.

According to Domenicos, Cardinal Farnese ordered his majordomo, Ludovico Tedesco, to dismiss him from Palazzo Farnese immediately after his departure for Caprarola⁴¹. The letter clearly conveys the painter's great sense of distress and disappointment at hearing that he was to be dismissed. In his defense, Domenicos reminded the cardinal of the circumstances of his arrival at Palazzo Farnese,

⁴⁰ Pérez de Tudela, 'Una carta inédita de El Greco al Cardenal Alessandro Farnesio', pp. 267-268:

"Ill.mo et R.mo S.r P[adr]one Oss.mo

Subito dopo la partita di v.s.Ill.ma il conte ludov[ic].o [Todesco] suo mastro di casa mi dete licentia per ordine, secondo lui dice di v.s. Ill.ma. Non posso lasciar di dolermi che essendo io chiamato da lei al suo servitio mossa dalla sua bontà, che sempre ha per usanza sostentare appresso di lei tutti quelli huomini che fà degni di anoverare trà la sua famiglia per l'eccellenza et rarità di qualche vertu, ben che io non mi reputasse degno di tanto honore. Et essaminandomi, et minutamente revedendomi non mi trovo tale che meritasse esser trattato à q[u]esto modo, conoscendomi huomo, che si come non ricercada v.s. Ill.ma tal favore, neanco meritava senza colpa mia esserne poi scacciato et mandato via di q[u]esta sorte, come ho detto non trovo en me occasione, ne causa per la q[u]ale meritasse questo scorno mi saria molto caro saperla per sodisfattion mia, et del mondo che dicio si meraviglera assai, et essendo come è falsa purgarla appresso V.S.Ill.ma come huomo che n' ho caro l'honor mio. Io sono per ubedire li comendamenti suoi, tanto in q[u]esta come in ogni altra cosa, lasciando queste quattro righe per testimonio dell'animo mio prontissimo, et fedelissimo mentre restara questa vita, al nome, et alla sua casa Ill.ma a la quale prego dal s.r Dio ogni fecilita, et grandezza. Di Roma 6 di luglio 1572

Di V.S.Illma et Rma /humiliss.mo et devot[i]ss.mo servo

Domenico Teotocopuli".

⁴¹ The cardinal left Rome, because work at Caprarola was ongoing and that Curzio Maccarone, the well-known *fontaniere*, was busy constructing the fountain in the Sala d' Ercole together with a group of craftsmen in the summer of 1572, Partridge, 'The Sala d'Ercole in the Villa Farnese at Caprarola: Part I', pp. 477, 480.

emphasizing that it was the cardinal who called him to his service⁴². The ideal outlined here is one of an expert who was approached by a patron who needed his help, which is reminiscent of Vitruvius' statement on the subject of obtaining patronage: 'my teachers, however, told me that it is proper to undertake work having been requested to do so, not asking for it, because a freeborn blush comes to the cheek from the shame of seeking a thing that excites mistrust'⁴³. However, while Domenicos specifically referred to his calling by the cardinal himself, he failed to mention any particular service offered to Alessandro during his stay at Palazzo Farnese. We cannot exclude the possibility of course that he intentionally omitted reference to any such work, so as to emphasize instead his reputation as a true 'vir bonus'. This hypothesis becomes plausible if we recall that later in the letter he declared that he was a man of honour and he did not deserve to be treated unfairly. The Cretan then underlined the fact that the cardinal had also called other men, before him, to his 'famiglia', men notable for their skills and talent⁴⁴. The comment should not be taken merely as the obsequious flattery of a courtier, but also as an echo of the well-established view that Alessandro was a patron sensitive to art and letters. Sixteenth-century writers, including Giovanni Andrea Gilio, stressed this quality of Farnese's character, when he wrote in 1564 that the cardinal 'has always favoured every virtuoso and every rare intellect'⁴⁵. Into this category of refined and talented men Domenicos apparently placed himself, implying that he thought himself worthy of a distinguished patron.

From the tone of his letter we can tell that Domenicos was in a very difficult position and that he decided to write the letter in the hope of reversing the cardinal's decision. Moreover, his reference to the 'people', who would be surprised at the news of his dismissal⁴⁶, indicates that he was considered to be an estimable personage. His anxiety over his good name therefore leads us to assume that he was by then fully assimilated into the cultivated elite that frequented the Farnese Palace. The 'people

⁴² Pérez de Tudela, 'Una carta inédita de El Greco al Cardenal Alessandro Farnesio', p. 268: "io chiamato da lei al suo servitio".

⁴³ Vitruvius, *De architectura*, Book VI, praef. 5, p. 15; for the Engl. transl. of the passage see Masterson, 'Status, Pay, and Pleasure in the 'De Architectura' of Vitruvius', p. 398.

⁴⁴ Pérez de Tudela, 'Una carta inédita de El Greco al Cardenal Alessandro Farnesio', p. 268: "tutti quelli huomini che fà degni di anoverare trà la sua famiglia per l'eccellenza et rarità di qualche vertu".

⁴⁵ *Trattati d'arte del Cinquecento: fra Manierismo e Controriforma*, ed. P. Barocchi, Bari, 1961, vol. II, p. 570, note 2: "L'illustrissimo Farnese... sempre è stato fautore d' ogni virtuoso e d' ogni pellegrino ingegno"; for similar praise of Cardinal Farnese by sixteenth-century artists and scholars see Robertson, *Il Gran Cardinale*, p. 233.

⁴⁶ Pérez de Tudela, 'Una carta inédita de El Greco al Cardenal Alessandro Farnesio', p. 268: "del mondo che dicio si meravigliera assai".

who will be very surprised' with the news were probably the painter's inner circle of friends and acquaintances, the well-read members of the Farnese circle, who were living with him under the same roof, such as Fulvio Orsini, Mattheo and Petros Devaris. The painter goes on to stress the fact that his expulsion was a humiliation that he did not deserve, and sets out the argument that he was a man of integrity⁴⁷. To support this view, he first claimed that he examined himself and found no fault⁴⁸ and, secondly, that it was important for him to prove his innocence, as he was a man 'who prized his honour'⁴⁹.

It is worth asking what he meant by the word 'honour', and if he used it to suggest that he was of noble birth. It is more likely that Domenicos was implying the self-respect and pride emanating from his artistic and, consequently, social status. The way Domenicos described himself corroborates the comment of Ligorio, who referred to him as a man who was proud of being a 'gentleman'⁵⁰. The painter's aspirations to display the status of a gentleman in Roman society may be further confirmed from the 1614 inventory of his library which, as mentioned above, included Camillo Agrippa's treatise on fencing. The fact that the book was in El Greco's possession suggests that he was interested in training in arms, an essential component of the education of a man with aspirations to gentility⁵¹. The emphatic use of the word 'honour' in Domenicos' letter ('huomo che caro l' honor mio') seems to reveal his moral code. Such a word, almost a natural concomitant of virtue, suggests a man who aspired to be seen as superior due to his personal qualities and education, rather than any titles. In other words, honour meant that one was worthy on the basis of one's own character and abilities, recalling the Aristotelian definition of self-worth in *Nicomachean Ethics*: 'a man needs to be born with moral vision, so to speak, whereby to discern correctly and choose what is truly good', because 'a man of good natural disposition

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p. 268.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p. 268: "essaminandomi, et minutamente revedendomi non mi trovo tale che meritasse esser trattato à questo modo".

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p. 268: "come huomo che n' ho caro l'honor mio".

⁵⁰ Coffin, 'Pirro Ligorio on the Nobility of the Arts', p. 203, note 48: "per la magnificenza, per la riputazione che si reca di signore".

⁵¹ *Fencing: A Renaissance Treatise by Camillo Agrippa*, p. xxiv: "It [sword] was an article of dress, a symbol of rank, and a constant companion'. Indeed, many sixteenth-century portraits of gentlemen and nobles often show the sitters carrying swords. In addition, as Mondschein noted in his introduction "Agrippa appealed to a second group of readers...namely an entire emerging class of self-made men outside of traditional power structures, such as aristocratic families and guilds..." (*ibid*, p. xlvii).

is a man well-endowed by nature'⁵². Like Aristotle, Cicero used the adjective 'honestus' ('respectable') in his most influential work the *De Officiis*, where at the end of his first book he discussed honourable and dishonourable trades. Cicero employed a number of criteria for the evaluation of professions that suited the worthy freeborn, and praised medicine and architecture for their usefulness ('utilitas') and mental engagement ('prudentia')⁵³. Thus 'honestum' ('honour') is the precondition of both one's social status and intellectual attainment. Perhaps this was how Domenicos sought to present himself in Fulvio's circle, respected and honoured, for the right reasons and in the right intensity.

The issue of Domenicos' dismissal is, however, complicated by the existence of another letter that was written shortly afterwards, on July 18 1572, by Count Tedesco. The letter is addressed to the cardinal and informs him of the imminent arrival of Curzio Maccarone and of other *stuccatori*, at Caprarola. It also includes the curious phrase 'I have repeated the service that was offered earlier to the Greek painter'⁵⁴, an utterance which has occasioned endless speculations as to its meaning. Although Tedesco did not mention the name of the painter, it has been assumed that he was referring to Domenicos, who seems to have been the only Greek painter in the Farnese household during this period. Jonathan Brown has argued that the phrase meant Domenicos was taking part in the decoration of the Sala d' Ercole at Caprarola⁵⁵. However, while Domenicos appears to have visited the villa⁵⁶ probably some time between 1571 and 1572 when he was still staying at Palazzo Farnese, it is highly unlikely that he participated in the programme, as nowhere at Caprarola is his hand identifiable.

Pérez de Tudela has recently argued that Tedesco's words 'ho reiterato l'officio' should be interpreted as the 'duty' that Count Tedesco had to repeat, namely

⁵² Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book III, v, 17, p. 151; Book IV, iv, 4-5, p. 229. According to Aristotle, honour stands as the mean between two extremes, between the excess of being ambitious ('φιλότιμον') and the deficiency of being unambitious ('αφιλότιμον').

⁵³ Cicero, *De Officiis*, Engl. transl. W. Miller, Loeb Classical Library, London, 1913, Book I, 151: "But the professions in which either a higher degree of intelligence is required or from which no small benefit to society is derived –medicine and architecture, for example, and teaching- these are proper for those whose social position the become".

⁵⁴ Partridge, 'The Sala d'Ercole in the Villa Farnese at Caprarola: Part I', p. 480, note 61: "Col pittore greco ho reiterato l'officio fatto seco per prima, et al pizzanero ordinato la parte solita".

⁵⁵ Brown, 'El Greco and Toledo', in *El Greco of Toledo*, p. 81: "...il pittore greco was working on the decoration of the Hall of Hercules in the Farnese villa at Caprarola".

⁵⁶ Domenicos wrote incorrectly on the margin of Vasari's *Vite* that the vault of the Camera dell' Aurora does not have stars, Marias, *El Greco y el arte de su tiempo*, Greek transl., p. 99: "no hay estrellas".

Domenicos' dismissal⁵⁷, drawing the conclusion that the cardinal's decision on Domenicos' case was irrevocable⁵⁸. Nevertheless, if the decision was irrevocable, why did Domenicos continue to stay at Palazzo Farnese for another twelve days, from July 6, when he wrote his letter, to July 18, when Count Tedesco wrote to the cardinal, despite Farnese's clear instructions to the contrary? It seems improbable that Domenicos remained in the Farnese Palace just to wait for an answer from the cardinal⁵⁹, an answer that was unlikely to come. Men of wealth and power, such as Alessandro Farnese, did not feel accountable to their courtiers for their decisions, particularly to a painter who was not even hired on a salaried basis. On the other hand, the word *officio* could be understood as the 'service', rather than 'duty', that had previously been offered to the Cretan, namely accommodation at Palazzo Farnese. This might explain the short time that Domenicos spent at the Farnese Palace after July 6. The extension of Domenicos' stay until July 18 probably involved a mediator, a friend, who could exert some influence on the cardinal, as the Cretan's letter would not have been enough to change the cardinal's initial decision. If indeed this was the case, I think we should probably exclude Clovio as the friend in question. After a first intimate phase described by Ligorio, the relationship between the two men appears to have cooled off, since Domenicos' comments about the miniaturist in the margins of Vasari's *Vite* were decidedly lukewarm⁶⁰. Perhaps Domenicos felt that Clovio had not supported him adequately to the cardinal or, if there was slander involved in his dismissal, that the miniaturist did not warn him in time. If someone did attempt to mollify the cardinal and restore the prestige of the Cretan in the summer of 1572, this must have been an old and trusted member of the Farnese *famiglia*, such as Fulvio Orsini. If indeed it was Fulvio, as I believe, he apparently failed to influence the cardinal, because in September 1572 we find Domenicos' name in the register of the Academy of St. Luke, as we will discuss further in the following chapter.

⁵⁷ Pérez de Tudela, 'A proposito di una lettera inedita di El Greco al Cardinale Alessandro Farnese', p. 180; for a different interpretation –equally questionable– see Marias, *Greco: Biographie d' un peintre extravagant*, p. 96: "Une lettre datée de Rome, le 18 juillet 1572, et adressée au cardinal Farnese par son majordome, le comte Ludovico Tedeschi, présente le peintre –pittore greco– comme un messenger portant des lettres de la ville au palais Farnèse de Caprarola..."

⁵⁸ Pérez de Tudela, 'A proposito di una lettera inedita di El Greco al Cardinale Alessandro Farnese', p. 178: "...sembra che la decisione del cardinale fosse irrevocabile..."

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p. 180.

⁶⁰ Marias, *El Greco y el arte de su tiempo*, Greek transl., pp. 75, 139.

The reasons for Domenicos' dismissal from the Farnese 'famiglia' remain a mystery, as neither Domenicos' nor Tedesco's letter provides the key. I suspect that the painter had been slandered –he does refer to wanting to clear his name, and was ready to stress his loyalty to the Farnese family at the end of his letter⁶¹. And slander was a common cause of tension between artists who were striving for a place under the roof of a powerful patron. There may, for example, have been a veiled rivalry between Domenicos and Bertoja over the cardinal's favour, which might have resulted in Bertoja's disparagement of the Cretan's work. It is also possible that Vasari, an old acquaintance of the Farnese court, was motivated by jealousy and played a role in the Cretan's defamation, as he had done before with Spranger⁶². If Vasari, whispering in the cardinal's ear, undermined Farnese's confidence in Domenicos' abilities, or if Domenicos suspected that he did, then this may explain why the Cretan used harsh and sarcastic language about him in his annotations on the *Vite*. Domenicos' belligerent mood against Vasari does seem to hide a personal antipathy that goes beyond his disagreement with Vasari on artistic matters⁶³.

On the other hand, it is also possible that Domenicos was dismissed because he had already started cultivating professional relations with men outside the Farnese household. Perhaps he was already at this early stage making overtures to the Spanish entourage in Rome with an eye to a royal commission, something that would surely have enraged the cardinal, since the Spanish had blocked his election to the papal throne⁶⁴. Or he may have already started approaching the Duke of Ferrara –a connection which will be discussed in the following chapter- who was a key rival of Farnese when it came to artistic patronage. Indeed, cardinals with power and money, such as Alessandro, whose possessiveness about people and

⁶¹ Pérez de Tudela, 'Una carta inédita de El Greco al Cardenal Alessandro Farnesio', p. 268.

⁶² Van Mander, *Le vite*, p. 295, fol. 271; although Van Mander's accuracy is sometimes questioned, his account about Spranger is important as he knew Spranger in person and he even worked alongside him in Vienna; S. Metzler, *Bartolomeus Spranger: Splendor and Eroticism in Imperial Prague*, exh. cat., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2014, pp. 29-30.

⁶³ See for example, Domenicos' comments on Raphael's *Liberation of St. Peter* and on Vasari's concluding phrases in Michelangelo's *Last Judgment*; Mariás, *El Greco y el arte de su tiempo*, Greek transl., pp. 167, 178. In both cases Domenicos shows a fiercely belligerent attitude that cannot be explained as a mere disagreement between two painters with different artistic ideas.

⁶⁴ Dandele, *Spanish Rome: 1500-1700*, p. 72.

objects was well known⁶⁵, were particularly vengeful at the slightest sign of disloyalty. It was precisely thanks to their dedication to the Farnese family that courtiers, such as Fulvio Orsini and Count Tedesco, managed to survive and retain their posts after Ranuccio Farnese's death in 1565⁶⁶.

Domenicos and Federico Zuccaro

It seems increasingly clear that El Greco, though esteemed among scholars of the caliber of Fulvio Orsini, was not fully appreciated for his exceptional intellect by all. When his tenure at the Farnese Palace came to an end in the summer of 1572, Domenicos must have regarded it with mixed feelings, and have felt uncomfortable about his ambiguous situation, whereby his undoubted artistic skills had not proven sufficient to ensure his artistic and social advancement in the city. The extent to which his professional life was affected by this problem may become clearer when we examine the nature of the associations that Domenicos formed with other artists working in Rome, such as Clovio, Bertoja, Vasari, and, above all, Federico Zuccaro.

Being of the same age, Domenicos and Federico had a lot in common, including their early artistic experience in Venice, and their acquaintance with Giovanni Grimani and his circle⁶⁷. They had also both enjoyed a friendship with Clovio, who had introduced them to Alessandro Farnese, and they had both been dismissed by the cardinal. Like Federico, who protested at his ill-treatment at the hands of Farnese⁶⁸, Domenicos seems to have felt that he had been treated badly by his patron, and that he was the victim of slander. If, as I have argued, Domenicos painted his *Boy Lighting a Candle* to take up the challenge of Apelles' art as Federico did in his *Calumny*, once the Cretan was dismissed from Palazzo Farnese he had every reason to gravitate towards Zuccaro. We know for certain that the two artists came into contact later, in Spain, as I shall discuss, but it is more than likely that they already knew each other in

⁶⁵ Robertson, *Il Gran Cardinale*, p. 13, where she mentions that Alessandro Farnese boasted "that he owned the three most beautiful things in Rome – his church of the Gesù, his palace and his daughter, Clelia".

⁶⁶ Tedesco was Ranuccio's majordomo (1564), and continued to work for Alessandro Farnese after Ranuccio's death; Robertson, *Il Gran Cardinale*, p. 231.

⁶⁷ Marías, *El Greco y su tiempo*, Greek transl., p. 95; Domenicos most likely saw, among others, the allegorical figures that Federico had painted on the vault of the principal staircase of Palazzo Grimani. Federico had arrived in Venice earlier, around 1564, and worked in the *scalone* of Palazzo Grimani and in the family chapel in the church of S. Francesco della Vigna, which after the death of Battista Franco in 1561 had remained incomplete; Acidini Luchinat, *Taddeo e Federico Zuccari*, vol. I, pp. 227-234.

⁶⁸ As described earlier, Zuccaro devised the allegory of the *Calumny of Apelles*; Acidini Luchinat, *Taddeo e Federico Zuccari*, vol. II, pp. 32-37; D. Heikamp, 'Vicende di Federigo Zuccari', *Rivista d'Arte*, xxxii, 1957, p. 179, note 19.

Rome. As they both knew Fulvio, it is possible that he introduced them, but in any case their paths could have crossed in a variety of contexts. In autumn of 1572, for instance, Domenicos was registered in the catalogues of the Accademia di San Luca, where Zuccaro had been a member since 1567. In September 1572, Federico was proposed as ‘reggente’ of the artists’ confraternity, the Virtuosi al Pantheon⁶⁹, and, while there is no evidence that Domenicos was directly involved in the Virtuosi, he knew many of those who were⁷⁰.

While Pope Gregory XIII’s pro-Bolognese patronage acted against both artists, arousing their frustration, Federico did manage to acquire private commissions with Raffaellino da Reggio, including the Ruiz Chapel in S. Caterina dei Funari (1571-1572)⁷¹, the monumental fresco of the *Annunciation* in the Jesuit church of S. Maria Annunziata (now destroyed), and the *Flagellation of Christ* in the Oratorio del Gonfalone in 1573. At some point later, he was also employed to paint the ceiling of the portico of St. Peter’s, although these scenes are no longer extant⁷². What emerges

⁶⁹ J.A.F. Orbaan, ‘Virtuosi al Pantheon: Archivalische Beiträge zur römischen Kunstgeschichte’, *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft*, xxxvii, 1915, p. 27.

⁷⁰ Although the Cretan was registered in the Academy of St. Luke in 1572, his name has not been found in the list of the Virtuosi al Pantheon (S. Giuseppe di Terrasanta), the artists’ confraternity that was founded in 1542. The confraternity, whose purpose was to help less fortunate artists and their families, met in the chapel of St. Joseph at the Pantheon every second Sunday of the month; Orbaan, ‘Virtuosi al Pantheon’, pp. 17-52; H. Waga, ‘Vita nota e ignota dei Virtuosi al Pantheon’, *L’Urbe*, xxx, 1967, pp. 1-11 and *L’Urbe*, xxxi, 1968, pp. 21-28. The internal structure of the confraternity included *reggente*, *aggiunti*, *camerlengo* and *segretario*. See also, A. Rodríguez G. De Ceballos, ‘Los virtuosos del Panteón de Roma y la iconografía de San José en El Greco’, in *El Greco in Italy and Italian Art, Proceedings of the International Symposium*, pp. 247-256. Many of the artists who were registered in the guild participated in the philanthropic activities of the confraternity, either from a position of power, such as Federico Zuccaro, or as simple members. These included, for example, Girolamo Siciolante da Sermoneta (1560), Girolamo Muziano (1560), Giovanni Antonio Dosio (1574) and Giulio Clovio, who bequeathed the confraternity half of his property; Bertolotti, ‘Don Giulio Clovio, principe dei miniatori’, p. 5. Clovio also participated in the Archiconfraternità SS. Crocifisso; in the book of *fratelli* next to the names of the aristocratic families of Orsini, Crescenzi, Strozzi, Frangipani, Capranica, Mattei we can read the name of Clovio; see A. Vannugli, ‘L’ arciconfraternita del SS. Crocifisso e la sua capella in San Marcello’, *Ricerche per la storia religiosa di Roma*, 5, 1984, pp. 429-443. It is worth noticing that Taddeo Zuccaro was also enrolled in the artists’ confraternity on September 17, 1560; J.A. Gere, *Taddeo Zuccaro: His Development Studied in His Drawings*, London, 1969, p. 21. For Federico Zuccaro see Aurigemma, ‘Lettere di Federico Zuccari’, p. 212, where members of the Virtuosi al Pantheon and Federico’s acquaintances are mentioned. The fact that El Greco’s name does not appear in the catalogues of the Virtuosi al Pantheon is a riddle, not only because he had close contacts with some of the artists who participated in it, such as Clovio, Zuccaro and Dosio, but also because he depicted the place of the gatherings of this small and exclusive group, the Pantheon, in the Parma *Healing of the Blind*.

⁷¹ S. Caterina dei Funari was constructed in 1560-1564 for Cardinal Federico Cesi (d.1565), artistic rival of Cardinal Farnese; A. Melograni, ‘Il cantiere cinquecento di S. Caterina dei Funari e le pitture della capella Cesi’, *Storia dell’arte*, 67, 1989, pp. 219-239, esp. p. 233, where it is mentioned that Federico was paid separately for the work done in S. Caterina by the confraternity for his work for the Cesi Chapel and by the Ruiz family for the two Evangelists, Luke and Marc, on the pilasters; Acidini Luchinat, *Taddeo e Federico Zuccari*, vol. II, pp. 43-50.

⁷² Acidini Luchinat, *Taddeo e Federico Zuccari*, vol. II, p. 53.

clearly is that Federico undertook important commissions in Rome partly because he enjoyed the friendship of important Roman families⁷³, and particularly the support of Cardinal Charles de Guise (1525-1574), with whom he went to Paris in 1573⁷⁴. It is, therefore, curious that the portrait of the French cardinal, now in the Kunsthaus in Zurich (c.1571) (fig. 19) has been attributed to Domenicos. This rests on its painterly handling, which is close to that of the *Portrait of a Gentleman* in Copenhagen, signed by El Greco⁷⁵. To my mind, however, it is precisely the way of representing the head and hair in the Zurich painting, along with the soft handling of the hands and of the white surplice that resists its inclusion in Domenicos' artistic output around that time. It also seems unlikely that the French cardinal, whose family had ties with the more fashionable Zuccari brothers⁷⁶, would have commissioned Domenicos to paint his portrait in 1571, particularly when the Cretan was still in the Farnese household.

While it may well have been the feelings of bitterness, caused by their dismissal from the Farnese household, and disappointment, aroused by the constant employment of Bolognese artists in the papal commissions after 1572, that first brought the two painters together, it would surely have been the commonality of interests and the deep concern with claims to artistic freedom that made them friends.

⁷³ For example, the Mattei family had been Taddeo's patrons (the family chapel, first on the right, in the church of S. Maria della Consolazione was decorated by Taddeo in 1556), and it was probably thanks to them that Federico received the commission for the Oratorio del Gonfalone. The coat-of-arms appeared in Federico's *Flagellation* at the Gonfalone belonged to Girolamo Mattei, *guardiano* of the Gonfalone in 1573, who probably paid for the fresco; Wollesen-Wisch, 'The Archiconfraternita del Gonfalone and its Oratory in Rome', p. 322; Ciriaco Mattei was *guardiano* of the Gonfalone in 1571-1572; Strinati, 'Gli anni difficili di Federico Zuccari', p. 94, note 16, p. 95.

⁷⁴ M.G. Aurigemma, 'Lettere di Federico Zuccaro', *Rivista dell'istituto nazionale d'archeologia e storia dell'arte*, xviii, 1995, p. 214; Acidini Luchinat, *Taddeo e Federico Zuccari*, vol. II, pp. 53-56. Federico arrived in Paris in September 1573 and Charles de Guise died in December 1574. Federico left from Paris and through Antwerp he reached England in 1575, where he stayed six months at the most; R.J. Strong, 'Federico Zuccaro's Visit to England in 1575', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 1959, xxii, pp. 359-360.

⁷⁵ M. Douglas-Scott, 'The Portrait of Charles de Guise, Cardinal of Lorraine', *Arte Veneta*, xxxvi, 1982, pp. 216-217; C. Klemm, 'Portrait of Charles de Guise, Cardinal de Lorraine', in *El Greco in Italy and Italian Art*, pp. 544-545; D. Stephen Pepper, 'Portrait of Charles de Guise, Duc de Lorraine', in *El Greco in Italy and Italian Art*, pp. 541-543, with relevant bibliography; Acidini Luchinat, *Taddeo e Federico Zuccari*, vol. II, p. 62, note 36, who following Harold Wethey has rejected the attribution of the portrait to El Greco: "già creduto di El Greco ma di ignoto veneziano". Also, J. Álvarez Lopera, 'Portrait of Charles de Guise, Cardinal de Lorraine', in *El Greco: Identity and Transformation*, p. 364, where he notes: "In my view, the debate regarding the authorship of the canvas still cannot be taken as closed...and as long as no new points of evidence emerge, it does not seem wise to reject the attribution to El Greco".

⁷⁶ The relationship between the Zuccari and the house of De Guise dated back from 1557, when François Duke of Guise, known as le Balafré, invited Taddeo to visit him in France. Taddeo's plans were, however, cancelled due to the war between France and Spain; Acidini Luchinat, *Taddeo e Federico Zuccari*, vol. II, p. 53; Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, vol. II, pp. 941-943.

Their experience as self-assured, cultivated painters, and their persistent defence of the elevated status of the artist, affected their mutual approach to the artistic practice of their day. Not surprisingly, as they both shared a certain amount of ‘exposure’ to classical sources, they strongly defended their artistic value on numerous occasions⁷⁷. And they were not only artists, but also theoreticians, (F. Zuccaro, *L’ idea de’ pittori, scultori ed architetti*, 1607; El Greco’s treatise has been lost), concerned with the intellectual role of painter. They also appear to have agreed on the pedagogic role of master, and the function of the studio as a place to teach and educate one’s younger assistants⁷⁸. The most important indication of how similar their ideas were can be gleaned from their handwritten annotations on the copy of Vasari’s *Vite* that Federico gave to Domenicos⁷⁹, in which they expressed similar opinions about other painters, both past and present. For example, they were like-minded on Leonardo’s failing to complete his works, on Correggio’s excellence in colour and grace⁸⁰, and they underlined the same passage in Pordenone’s life (1483-1539)⁸¹. When Vasari wrote of Francesco Salviati (1510-1563) that his octagonal painting on the ceiling of one of the rooms at Palazzo Grimani was the best picture in Venice, Federico replied: ‘bias and ignorance’⁸², and Domenicos added: ‘this note on the margin belongs to Federico Zuccaro and he is right; what can one say about such shamelessness and evil?’⁸³. The

⁷⁷ For El Greco see Kagan, ‘El Greco and the Law’, pp. 79-90; as previously discussed, Federico devised the *Calumny of Apelles* in 1570s, and later the *Porta Virtutis*, which ended in his trial for slander, brief incarceration and consequent banishment from Rome in 1581; Gerards-Nelissen, ‘Federigo Zuccaro and the Lament of Painting’, p. 53; C.L.C.E. Witcombe, ‘Gregory XIII and the Accademia di San Luca in Rome’, *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*, 54, 2009, pp. 107-118.

⁷⁸ For the role of El Greco as a teacher see chapter 7; for Federico’s role see Ważbiński, ‘Lo studio –La scuola fiorentina di Federico Zuccari’, pp. 277-296.

⁷⁹ Federico’s views about his contemporary artists have been recorded on three copies of Vasari’s *Vite*, one with his handwritten annotations concerning Taddeo’s life, which belonged to Siense Alessandro Saracini and is now lost; a second that consists of his and Lelio Guidiccioni’s comments (1582-1643), now in Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris; and a third one, which he gave as a gift to Domenicos and contains Federico’s, Domenicos’ and Louis Tristan’s (c.1585-1649) annotations. For Saracini’s copy see Vasari, *Vite*, vol. VII, p. 73, note 1, where Milanese wrote: “Nel citato esemplare vasariano della edizione del 1568, già posseduto dal cavaliere Alessandro Saracini di Siena, le postile autografe di Federigo Zuccheri a questa Vita di suo fratello sono, com’ era ben naturale, in maggior numero che in ogni altra...”; for the annotations of the copy of Vasari’s *Vite* with Federico’s and Lelio Guidiccioni’s comments, Hochmann, ‘Les annotations marginales de Federico Zuccaro’, pp. 64-71. For an analysis of the above copies, N. Hadjinicolaou in the introduction of the Greek translation of F. Marias, *El Greco y su tiempo*, pp. vj’-ie’.

⁸⁰ Marias, *El Greco y su tiempo*, Greek transl. pp. 26, 31-32.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, p. 54.

⁸² *Ibid*, p. 95, note 169: “partialita & ignorantia”.

⁸³ *Ibid*, p. 95: “esta margen es de Federico Zuccaro y cierto es ¿qué más se ha de decir de tan desvergüenza y lástima?”

two artists also shared appreciation of Palladio, whom Federico met during his stay in Venice, even travelling with him to Cividale, one of Grimani's principal towns⁸⁴.

Their greatest rival was Vasari, and their handwritten annotations on the *Vite* document their mutual dislike for their author, whom they often accused of ignorance and partiality⁸⁵. If their common resentment for Vasari bound them together, their shared respect for Taddeo was probably the catalyst for their friendship. For one thing, the portrait of Taddeo in the copy of Vasari's *Vite*, which they both owned was blacked out, suggesting that Zuccaro considered his brother's image to be inaccurate; Domenicos added some more dark lines on the portrait⁸⁶, indicating that he agreed with Federico. Similarly, when Vasari wrote that Taddeo had not surpassed Salviati, either in the Sala Fasti Farnesiani at Caprarola, or in any other work, Federico wrote in the marginalia of Guidiccioni's copy of the *Vite* that Vasari's spite was obvious⁸⁷, and Domenicos added later in his own copy that Vasari's ignorance was apparent⁸⁸.

Circumstantial evidence suggests that Domenicos' interest in Taddeo's work came early in his career. His *Adoration of the Shepherds* (J.F. Willumsens Museum, Frederickssund) (fig. 20) was based on a drawing by Taddeo that was partly repeated in a study now in Chatsworth (c. 1550, The Devonshire collections)⁸⁹ (fig. 21). Taddeo's drawing was made popular by Cornelis Cort's engraving (fig. 56), which circulated in three successive editions, one of which dated from 1571⁹⁰. Domenicos

⁸⁴ Cooper, *Palladio's Venice*, p. 65.

⁸⁵ Federico's pointed remarks against Vasari may have been partly generated by the Aretine's unfavourable account of Taddeo's life in the *Vite*. Federico's series of drawings illustrating the Early Life of Taddeo, now in the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, have been seen as "an 'answer' to Vasari's account, incorporating events included in Federico's postille... and focusing on the aspects of his brother's life that Federico felt should be emphasized" (J. Brooks, 'Introduction', in *Taddeo and Federico Zuccaro, Artist-Brothers in Renaissance Rome*, p. 3). Nevertheless, Federico and Vasari agreed on some incidents of Taddeo's life; for example, when Vasari wrote that Taddeo was taken as an assistant at the studio of Giovanni Piero Calabrese (Giovanni Piero Condopoulos, an artist of Greek origin from South Italy). Federico's drawing of *Taddeo in the House of Giovanni Piero Calabrese* accords well with Vasari's account, *Taddeo and Federico Zuccaro, Artist-Brothers in Renaissance Rome*, p. 30, cat. no 7.

⁸⁶ Mariás, *El Greco y su tiempo*, Greek transl. pp. 3, 99.

⁸⁷ Hochmann, 'Les annotations marginales de Federico Zuccaro', p. 71, vie de Taddeo Zuccaro: "manifesta passione et malignita per esaltare il Salviati in questo luochu piu che merita e biasimar Tadeo ma l' opera e nota e manifesto assai il valor de luno e del altro, e quanto li vaglia sempre antipore i Toscani a tutte le altre nationi"; Vasari, *Vite*, vol. VII, p. 97, where Milanese read "ei voglia" instead of "li vaglia".

⁸⁸ Mariás, *El Greco y su tiempo*, Greek transl. p. 99: "manifiesta es su ignorancia".

⁸⁹ Gere, *Taddeo Zuccaro: His Development Studied in his Drawings*, p. 136, cat. 19, pl. 50; Acidini Luchinat, *Taddeo e Federico Zuccari*, vol. I, p. 278, fig. 27; *El Greco in Italy and Italian Art*, p. 288, fig. 1.

⁹⁰ J.F. Willumsen, *La jeunesse du peintre El Greco*, Paris, 1927, vol. II, pp. 337-360; N. Hadjinicolaou, 'The Adoration of the Shepherds' in *El Greco in Italy and Italian Art*, pp. 499-501; N. Hadjinicolaou,

responded to Taddeo's work by simplifying the composition, omitting the upper part with angels and part of the architecture, and by reducing the number of shepherds⁹¹. The dating of the Frederickssund *Adoration*, however, has divided art historians. It was first suggested that the Frederickssund *Adoration* was painted just before Domenicos left Venice⁹². Recently, it has been proposed that the picture was painted when Domenicos first arrived in Venice, together with the Modena *Triptych* (Galleria Estense) and the *Last Supper* in Bologna (Pinacoteca Nazionale), based on the fact that Domenicos used the same bright colours in all three paintings⁹³. If we take into account Domenicos' interest in copying groups of figures in a narrative, as demonstrated by the Frederickssund *Adoration*, as well as his attempt to render the human body accurately in three dimensions, through the use of shadow and light, as his drawing of *Day* proves, I think that the Frederickssund *Adoration* must belong in the painter's conceptual transition between Venice and Rome. Given that the composition is better constructed with the figures occupying a much clearer relationship to each other and to their surroundings, I would suggest that the picture was executed in the early 1570s.

While the above account indicates the beginning of an artistic 'dialogue' between the Greek painter and Taddeo, there may be more to it. Taddeo was in considerable demand in Rome during the period that immediately preceded Domenicos' Roman sojourn, a fact which may explain the Cretan's interest in the recently-deceased painter. Besides, his brother, Federico, was a leading master in the city and they were all members of the Farnese household, at one time or another. My primary aim here is to clarify the relationship between Domenicos and the Zuccari brothers, through the consideration of a number of figural and landscape motifs which the three artists used in their compositions, and to suggest that the Italian masters

'The Adoration of the Shepherds', in *El Greco: Identity and Transformation*, pp. 360-361 with the relevant bibliography.

⁹¹ Willumsen, *La jeunesse du peintre El Greco*, vol. II, pp. 342-346.

⁹² *Ibid*, vol. II, pp. 337-360, where Willumsen presented the theory that Cornelis Cort may have given Domenicos his engraving in 1569; although the dating of the picture in 1570 is possible, the above hypothesis is not convincing.

⁹³ Hadjinicolaou, 'The Adoration of the Shepherds' in *El Greco in Italy and Italian Art*, p. 500: "...I believe that the Modena *Triptych*, the Bologna *Last Supper* and the Willumsen *Adoration* should be dated to the beginning of the artist's three-year sojourn in Venice"; Hadjinicolaou, 'The Adoration of the Shepherds', in *El Greco: Identity and Transformation*, p. 360; Hadjinicolaou, 'The Adoration of the Shepherds', in *El Greco: Identity and Transformation*, p. 361. To make things more complicated, there are also art historians who argue that the Modena *Triptych* is of Cretan origin, see for example, M. Vassilaki, 'Three Questions on the Modena Triptych', in *El Greco of Crete: Proceedings of the International Symposium*, pp. 119-132.

helped the Cretan to expand his artistic vocabulary in a way that enriched his style significantly. For example, the depiction of two ‘repoussoir’ figures, seen from the back on the left and right of the *Healing of the Blind* (Galleria Nazionale, Parma), and more importantly a figure that appears in both the Parma *Healing* and in a version of it (Wrightsman collection, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) which in all probability he carried with him to Rome, seem to prove Domenicos’ interest in Taddeo’s art. In the Parma picture, in particular, the youth who bends over the blind as if to support him (fig. 13) is almost identical to the figure who supports Eutychus on the extreme right of Taddeo’s *Raising of Eutychus* (c.1558) for the important Frangipani Chapel in the church of S. Marcello al Corso (fig. 22)⁹⁴. The sketchy depiction of the same figure in the Metropolitan *Healing of the Blind* (fig. 4) suggests the painter’s practical concern of recording a useful pictorial motif, and may be seen as evidence for dating this picture earlier than the Parma version, in which the bending figure has been more carefully constructed. The similarities between the Parma *Healing* and Taddeo’s figure become even more striking if we compare Domenicos’ bending man with the supporter of Eutychus in Taddeo’s highly finished drawing of the same subject now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (fig. 23)⁹⁵. The Metropolitan drawing, however, reveals the knowledge of Michelangelo’s art, whose influence becomes apparent not only in the solidity of form in space and in the pose of Eutychus, which recalls the Pauline chapel, but also in the use of the side figures, such as the man who bends to support Eutychus⁹⁶. The complex and artificial position of the figure may have been derived from Marcantonio Raimondi’s engraving of the *Climbers* after Michelangelo (1510, British Museum)⁹⁷. In the *Climbers* (fig. 24) the man who is reaching out into the water is very similar to the figure supporting Eutychus in Taddeo’s *Raising of Eutychus*, and equally similar to the man who bends over the blind man in Domenicos’ picture. The fact that Domenicos represented the man reaching out his left arm and bending his head on the

⁹⁴ The commission occupied Taddeo for a long time, from 1559 until 1566, and it was eventually finished by Federico; *Taddeo and Federico Zuccaro, Artist-Brothers in Renaissance Rome*, pp. 57-61; particularly, Taddeo’s two prophets were extremely influential and were much copied (*ibid*, p. 61).

⁹⁵ Gere, *Taddeo Zuccaro: His Development Studied in his Drawings*, p. 179, cat. 142, pls. 84, 85. According to Gere, the twisting movements of the group of Eutychus’ supporters and the pose of the figure standing with its back turned on the viewer suggest Venice, not Rome, and, in particular, it suggests the influence of Giuseppe Salviati, (*ibid*, pp. 75-76).

⁹⁶ *Taddeo and Federico Zuccaro, Artist-Brothers in Renaissance Rome*, p. 58, cat. no 48 & pp. 59-60.

⁹⁷ B. Barnes, *Michelangelo in Print, Reproductions as Response in the Sixteenth Century*, Surrey, 2010, p. 16, fig. 1.4.

left-hand side as Taddeo did, while in Raimondi's engraving the figure is reaching out his right arm and bending his head on the right-hand side, suggests that he preferred Taddeo's solution to display his skill in foreshortening. The pose of this figure, which apparently Domenicos considered memorable, since he repeated it twice, clearly indicates that the painter studied the figures of the Frangipani Chapel carefully, and that he was attracted to Taddeo's ability to assimilate accessible and compositionally useful models into his works. In any case, the variations on the Healing of the Blind theme show that it suited his purposes as an aspiring artist of the Farnese household to exhibit his range of skills through these artistic experiments.

Federico would have approved of, if not encouraged, Domenicos' interest in Taddeo's work. Given that the two brothers had worked closely together for some time, Federico had many works and drawings by his brother in his studio, which he could have shown to Domenicos. One of these was surely the small panel by Taddeo depicting the *Agony in the Garden* which displays Correggienesque features⁹⁸ (Strossmayer Gallery, Zagreb) (fig. 27). This painting, along with Taddeo's fresco of the same subject in the Mattei Chapel in S. Maria della Consolazione (1553-1556)⁹⁹ (fig. 28), seem to have provided inspiration for the Cretan's own *Agony in the Garden*¹⁰⁰, executed later in Spain (early 1590s, The Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, Ohio; c.1600-5, Diocesan Museum, Cuenca) (figs. 25, 26)¹⁰¹.

Another motif that was closely associated with the Zuccari, and with El Greco's Roman experience was that of the *Pietà*, or the Dead Christ, initially supported by God the Father, and later by angels. This was a theme that seems to have preoccupied both the Zuccari and Domenicos over a long span of time, with Domenicos' most

⁹⁸ J.A. Gere, 'Two Panel-Pictures by Taddeo Zuccaro and Some Related Compositions-II. The 'Agony in the Garden' in the Strossmayer Gallery, Zagreb', *The Burlington Magazine*, 105, 1963, p. 390.

⁹⁹ Gere, *Taddeo Zuccaro: His Development Studied in His Drawings*, figs. 67, 69.

¹⁰⁰ Three paintings of the *Agony in the Garden* were listed in Domenicos' inventory in 1614 and five more in the 1621 inventory of his son's possessions; De Borja de San Román y Fernández, *El Greco en Toledo*, pp. 191-194: "una oracion del guerto", in *El Greco: Documents on His Life and Work*, pp. 271-273; F. De Borja de San Román y Fernández, 'De la vida del Greco: Nueva serie de documentos inéditos', *Archivo Español de Arte*, 3, 1927, pp. 70-84, nos 14, 30, 76, 139, 176, in *El Greco: Documents on His Life and Work*, pp. 372-380.

¹⁰¹ It has been argued that these pictures capture elements of Titian's *Agony in the Garden* (1562, Museo del Prado Madrid), *El Greco*, [exh. cat. ed. D. Davies, New York/London, 2004], p. 153: "...El Greco's Venetian contemporary Francesco Bassano painted an *Agony in the Garden* in a vertical format almost identical to this [the Cuenca *Agony in the Garden*] may suggest a common prototype or a source in a print as yet identified". In my opinion, the influence of Taddeo's works on Domenicos' *Agony in the Garden* in Cuenca can be seen not only in the division of the scene into two distinct parts, that of Christ in the upper part and that of his disciples in the foreground, but also in the lighting emanating from Christ and in the poses of the sleeping figures.

notable exploration being at S. Domingo in Toledo. But his work there was informed by a lengthy interest that most certainly dated back to his time in Rome, and to versions by both Federico and Taddeo. Domenicos would have seen Federico's fresco of the *Dead Christ with Angels* at Caprarola (1566) (fig. 33), itself a reworking of an earlier version by Taddeo¹⁰², when he visited the Farnese Palace there in 1570-1572; Federico himself had already executed two drawings of this subject in 1563 (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston) (fig. 31), one of which is a faithful copy after Dürer's woodcut of the *Trinity* (1511), while the other has the body of the Dead Christ being supported by an angel in heaven (Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven) (fig. 32)¹⁰³. Although the exact purpose for the latter drawing has yet to be established, it is connected to Taddeo's version, which also seems to have followed Dürer's basic arrangement of Christ in the centre of the scene. Significantly, both brothers substituted Dürer's God the Father with an Angel, following a new tradition, which was introduced by the Florentine Andrea del Sarto (1486-1530) in his now lost Puccini four-figure *Pietà* with angels dated from 1515-1516¹⁰⁴. Another important influence on the development of this theme was constituted by Michelangelo's four-figure *Pietà* (c.1550, Museo dell' Opera del Duomo, Florence), where the tall, hooded figure of Nicodemus supports Christ, replacing Del Sarto's Angel. The sculptured group was at the time in Rome in the collection of Francesco Bandini (c.1496-1562), where it was seen by Domenicos¹⁰⁵. Clearly impressed by it, the Cretan made two

¹⁰² Vasari, *Vite*, vol. VII, p. 95; Federico kept and consequently replaced his brother's *Dead Christ with Angels*, originally executed for the Farnese chapel at Caprarola, with the same composition in fresco. Taddeo's original *Dead Christ with Angels* is now thought to be in a private collection in Piemonte, while a version of it, now in the Borghese Gallery in Rome, is regarded as a copy by Federico after Taddeo; Acidini Luchinat, *Taddeo e Federico Zuccari*, vol. I, pp. 216-218. Another *Dead Christ with Angels* is in the Palazzo Ducale in Urbino, reproduced in F. Zeri, *Pittura e Controriforma: L'arte senza tempo di Scipione da Gaeta*, Vicenza, [1st ed. Torino, 1957], 1998, pl. 33.

¹⁰³ *Renaissance into Baroque: Italian Master Drawings by the Zuccari: 1550-1600*, ed. E.J. Mundy & E. Ourusoff de Fernandez-Gimenez, exh. cat., Milwaukee, 1989, pp. 180-182, nos 55-56, fig. 26; Acidini Luchinat, *Taddeo e Federico Zuccari*, vol. I, p. 218, where it is argued that Federico's drawing in the Yale University Art Gallery was almost certainly executed in the Veneto; also *ibid.*, p. 270, figs. 13, 14.

¹⁰⁴ Agostino Veneziano's engraving is presented in J. Shearman, 'The Dead Christ by Rosso Fiorentino', *Boston Museum Bulletin*, 64, 1966, p. 153.

¹⁰⁵ W.E. Wallace, 'Michelangelo, Tiberio Calcagni, and the Florentine Pietà', *Artibus et Historiae*, 21, 2000, p. 88. The Bandini family was one of the wealthiest Florentine banking families living in Rome, and Francesco was one of Michelangelo's closest friends. Francesco's son, Pierantonio Bandini (1504-1592), had a collection of antiquities in his house at Monte Cavallo, where the Florentine *Pietà* was displayed. Domenicos was not the sort of artist who could only rely on the information given by a print, such as Cherubino Alberti's Florence *Pietà* (c.1575), without having direct experience of the work itself. Therefore, I disagree with the hypothesis that "El Greco need not have known Michelangelo's sculpture first hand, and indeed, is more likely to have taken as his point of departure

highly finished studies of it, one in the Johnson collection (c.1572, The Philadelphia Museum of Art) and the other in The Hispanic Society of America (c.1572, New York) (figs. 57, 58). Yet he also managed to assimilate Sarto's Puccini *Pietà*, or at least Agostino Veneziano's engraving after it (1516-1520, British Museum, London), when he was painting the landscape in the above-mentioned small compositions. Closely following del Sarto's austere setting, Domenicos depicted the steep slope of Calvary towards the left of the scene, stressing the element of *Lamentation*, and establishing the time of mourning just after the Deposition from the Cross.

When Domenicos arrived in Toledo, he returned to the two-figure *Pietà* theme in his *Trinity* in S. Domingo (fig. 34) (1577, Museo del Prado, Madrid). As he rethought the scene, he dropped the background setting of Calvary altogether, retaining, however, the pathetic motif of Christ's fallen head, and the active role of angels who, while they do not support Christ's dead body, are modelled carefully, life-size, in an artful and expressive way, echoing Veneziano's engraving. Like Michelangelo's Florentine *Pietà* and the *Pietà* for Vittoria Colonna, Domenicos focused on the front-facing figure of Christ, having God the Father support the Dead Christ from behind and yet seated on His lap, with the right leg falls in a zig zag between His legs. And it is only when we consider the long and complex artistic background to the picture, with its fusion of sources and a Romanist combination of erudition and virtuosity, that we can truly appreciate its qualities. His *Trinity* represents a conspicuous combination of elements from Dürer, Andrea del Sarto and Michelangelo, seen through the eyes of Taddeo and Federico. It is important to stress that in his *Trinity* in 1577 El Greco deliberately chose to revoke the earlier transition from Dürer's God the Father to the Angel in the Sarto-Zuccari compositions, substituting the Angel with God the Father again. Perhaps, the Cretan concluded that this solution was preferable, creating in this way a poetic, heavenly scene with a sense of physical reality, and atmospheric effect.

Whatever the reason, it seems that this version made an impression on Federico when he visited Toledo in 1586¹⁰⁶, as he appears to cite it in his decoration of the Pucci-Cauco chapel in the church of Trinitá dei Monti, which was executed shortly

an anonymous engraving...”, *El Greco*, [exh. cat., ed. D. Davies, New York/London, 2004], p. 108. For Cherubino Alberti's *Pietà* after Michelangelo see Barnes, *Michelangelo in Print*, p. 147, fig. 6.1.

¹⁰⁶ Acidini Luchinat, *Taddeo e Federico Zuccari*, vol. II, p. 286, 7h.; Marias, *El Greco y su tiempo*, Greek transl. p. 3; Ważbiński, 'Lo studio –La scuola fiorentina di Federico Zuccari', pp. 299-306; M. Koshikawa, 'El Greco and Federico Zuccaro', in *El Greco in Italy and Italian Art: Proceedings of the International Symposium*, pp. 357-371.

after his return from Spain (1588)¹⁰⁷. Federico's fresco of *God the Father Supporting the Dead Christ* (fig. 35) seems to follow the *S. Domingo Trinity* not only in the way that Christ's powerful dead body is drawn in a strong zig zag pattern, but also in representing Christ in the arms of God the Father. It is almost as if there was some kind of tripartite contest in these renderings of the theme, which involved Taddeo, Federico and Domenicos, if not Michelangelo. Like Domenicos, Federico depicted his *God the Father Supporting the Dead Christ* above an *Assumption of the Virgin*. Then, both Domenicos and Federico divided the scene of the *Assumption* (figs. 36, 37) into heaven and earth. The Virgin is depicted with her arms outstretched and hands open, her eyes raised to the figure of the Dead Christ above, surrounded by angels. On earth, the Apostles are divided in two groups to either side of the empty sarcophagus, discussing the miracle. Of special interest is Federico's Apostle at the back of the group to the left, who is depicted in a yellow mantle stretching out his arm in such a way as to lead the spectator's eyes to the miracle in heaven. His frontal position mirrors Domenicos' Apostle, who has turned his back on the viewer and, as such, the two figures could be viewed as pictorial counterparts. It is possible that both Domenicos and Federico used Taddeo's study, now in the Uffizi (fig. 38), as a starting point for their compositions, as that also contains a figure on the left who is depicted with his back to the spectator, pointing at the empty sarcophagus¹⁰⁸. If this was the case, it further suggests that Domenicos had direct access to Taddeo's drawings in Federico's possession.

The above affinities give us some indication of the kind of artistic convergence between the Zuccari and El Greco, and of the strong probability that their artistic dialogue had begun in Rome. Like Taddeo and Federico, who drew incessantly, adapting and elaborating upon their models, Domenicos did not constrain himself to one painter or prototype, but combined elements taken from various sources, as already discussed in the analysis of the Minneapolis *Purification of the Temple*. Creating a finished work of art without suggesting a directly identifiable model was a complex procedure, which entailed a well-educated mind ranging over an extensive

¹⁰⁷ J. A. Gere, 'Two of Taddeo Zuccaro's Last Commissions, Completed by Federico Zuccaro. I: The Pucci Chapel in S. Trinità dei Monti', *The Burlington Magazine*, 108, 1966, pp. 286-293; Acidini Luchinat, *Taddeo e Federico Zuccari*, vol. I, pp. 269, 270, fig. 12.

¹⁰⁸ This figure reappears with minor modifications in an engraving by Aliprando Caprioli, dated 1577 which, according to Gere, represents "an intermediate study for the group", Gere, 'Two of Taddeo Zuccaro's Last Commissions, Completed by Federico Zuccaro. I: The Pucci Chapel in S. Trinità dei Monti', p. 290, figs 9, 10; Acidini Luchinat, *Taddeo e Federico Zuccari*, vol. I, pp. 271, 281, note 31.

tradition of knowledge. Participating in the same scholarly circles, both Domenicos and Federico were evidently involved in learned discussions, as both their later *postille* on Vasari make clear. Their shared intellectual interests can be further explored through another motif that occupied them both: that of the ‘path of Virtue’ (‘il cammino della Virtù’). As we shall see, this was a theme that encouraged analogies between literary and artistic production, and could be used to express the ideal of the artist as an intellectual -issues that were under discussion in the Roman artistic circles in 1570s. The idea of the ‘path of virtue’ was first explored by Federico around 1570, when he was working on the *Calumny of Apelles*¹⁰⁹. The cartouche on the base of the frame in the drawing of the *Calumny* (Kunsthalle, Hamburg, Inv. no. 21516) depicts Minerva and Mercury urging a youth to take the steep path to the summit of a mountain¹¹⁰. Around the same time Raffaellino da Reggio, evidently under Federico’s strong influence, painted a fresco with a similar subject, ‘Hercules led by Virtue’, on the façade of Francesco da Volterra’s house (c.1573)¹¹¹. It cannot be coincidental that Domenicos also became interested in the theme as he used it in the background of his *Martyrdom of St. Maurice and the Theban Legion* in the Escorial¹¹² (fig. 42), executed for Philip II in Spain around 1580-1582.

The idea of the ‘path of Virtue’ (‘aretês odon/via virtutis’) was first expounded in Hesiod’s *Works and Days* (286-292), and was repeated in Xenophon’s *Memorabilia*: ‘long and steep is the path to her [virtue] and rough at the first; but when you reach the top, then at length the road is easy, hard though it remains’¹¹³. The theme of the path to Virtue seems to have been closely akin to the choice of Hercules, which became known from the sophist Prodicus’ account, which Xenophon put into the mouth of his Socrates¹¹⁴; Cicero repeated the story in his *De officiis* (I.32.118 & III.5.25). Fulvio clearly knew these precedents, as he included a brief

¹⁰⁹ Vasari, *Vite*, vol. VII, p. 76, note 1.

¹¹⁰ A drawing by Zuccaro with the motif of the path of Virtue is now in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford; Ważbiński, ‘Lo studio –La scuola fiorentina di Federico Zuccari’, p. 310, fig. 39.

¹¹¹ Baglione, *Le vite*, p. 26; Baglione also reported that this fresco was the most beautiful work Raffaellino had painted and it brought him great fame (‘gli diede grandissima fama’). A drawing by either Raffaellino or Federico (Staatliche Graphische Sammlung in Munich), in which Virtue and Mercury lead Hercules to a temple on a steep hill, gives us a general idea of the iconography used by the master and his assistant. The drawing is reproduced in Ważbiński, ‘Lo studio –La scuola fiorentina di Federico Zuccari’, p. 311, fig. 40.

¹¹² For the *Martyrdom of St. Maurice and the Theban Legion* which was commissioned for a side chapel, but never hung, see R. Mulcahy, *The Decoration of the Royal Basilica of El Escorial*, Cambridge, 1994, pp. 54-67.

¹¹³ Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, Engl. transl. E.C. Marchant & O.J. Todd, Loeb Classical Library, [Cambridge Mass., 1923], reprint. London, 2013, Book II, 1.20, p.103.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, Book II, 1.21-1.34, pp.103-113.

account of Prodicus' story about Hercules' choice in his own *Imagines* in 1570¹¹⁵. And it seems that both he and Federico were so taken with the choice between good and bad, and with all the difficulties involved in pursuing good, that they later included the theme in the decoration of rooms in their respective residences. Between 1593 and 1603, Zuccaro depicted the 'cammino della Virtù' on the ceiling of his Palazzo in Rome (fig. 43), and around this scene he and his collaborators painted the Labours of Hercules, pointing to the idea of virtuous labour. Around the same time Annibale Carracci depicted the path of virtue in his *Choice of Hercules* (1596, Museo di Capodimonte, Naples) on the ceiling of the Camerino Farnese, the programme for which was furnished by Fulvio Orsini¹¹⁶. Given the close contact between Federico, Fulvio and Domenicos, it is hardly surprising that the Greek also turned to this theme. Applying Fulvio's working method and aesthetic principles, El Greco used well known excerpts from the books that he owned, including Xenophon, Cicero and Petrarch, who also recounted the story of Hercules in his *De vita solitaria*¹¹⁷, for the generation of ideas for his picture. Recalling the pictorial motif of the 'via virtutis', used in the early drawing of *Calumny* by Federico Zuccaro, Domenicos painted the Roman leaders of the Theban legion in the foreground of the *Martyrdom of St. Maurice* as being at a crossroads between vice and virtue, discussing which path to choose, just like Hercules. In the background on the left, some soldiers have already chosen the path of virtue and martyrdom. The presence of the angels, who are holding the laurel wreaths of honour in the upper part, confirms that their heroic acts on earth assured them a place in heaven. By incorporating the mythological-allegorical motif of the path of Virtue in his religious scene, Domenicos was clearly showcasing his learning, as well as his skill in conflating various literary and pictorial motifs¹¹⁸, inviting speculative associations with and allegorical readings of the picture. As before, however, he failed to tailor his images to the tastes and preferences of his distinguished patron. The preoccupation of the main figures in the *Martyrdom of St.*

¹¹⁵ Orsini, *Imagines et elogia virorum illustrium*, pp. 60-61.

¹¹⁶ Martin, *The Farnese Gallery*, pp. 44-46.

¹¹⁷ T.E. Mommsen, 'Petrarch and the Story of the Choice of Hercules', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, xvi, 1953, pp. 178-192.

¹¹⁸ Bury argues that Domenicos used a woodcut from the book of Du Chou's *Discours sur la castrametation des anciens Romain* for the composition of the *Martyrdom of St. Maurice*, and that a copy of the above book must have been among El Greco's books in Spain, Bury, 'A Source for El Greco's *St. Maurice*', p. 145, figs 13, 14 & pp. 147-148.

Maurice with the path of Virtue was eventually regarded as a distraction from the physical side of the saint's martyrdom, and Philip II rejected the painting¹¹⁹.

It seems to me that El Greco's acquaintance with Federico, and their visual 'discourse', which began in Rome and continued through their subsequent interaction, was a key aspect of the Cretan's artistic development. They were part of the same world in Rome and this is the artistic context which would also inform many of his Spanish paintings. To take a final example in this chain of visual 'dialogue' between the Cretan and the Zuccari, we find that a preparatory drawing by Federico, now in the Uffizi (fig. 40), was also the source of inspiration for the heavenly vision with angels in the clouds depicted in the upper part of Domenicos' *Allegory of the Holy League*, (1577-1579, Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo, El Escorial) (fig. 39). Federico's drawing was made for the *Annunciation with Prophets* (1566-1571), a scene painted in the apse of the Jesuit church of S. Maria Annunziata in Rome. The church, which became 'an immediate success...and lauded in virtually every guidebook and commentary on art in Rome'¹²⁰, was later demolished, but the fresco is recorded in a double-folio engraving by Cornelis Cort of 1571 (fig. 41)¹²¹, as well as in various drawings¹²². What seems to bind Domenicos' *Allegory* with Federico's

¹¹⁹ Mulcahy, *The Decoration of the Royal Basilica of El Escorial*, p. 57; Domenicos' painting was replaced by Romulo Cincinato's *Martyrdom of St. Maurice*, painted in 1583-1584.

¹²⁰ M.S. Weil, 'The Relationship of the Cornaro Chapel to Mystery Plays and Italian Court Theatre', in *All the World's a Stage: Art and Pageantry in the Renaissance and Baroque*, ed. B. Wisch & S. Scott Munshower, Pennsylvania, 1990, vol. II, p. 463.

¹²¹ Apart from Cornelis Cort's engraving after Zuccaro (46,5×69,4 cm, The Harvard University Art Museum), there was one more by Raphael Sadeler (29,3×45 cm, Archivium Historicum Societatis Iesu, Rome) that followed faithfully Cort's and was dated in 1580; *Saint, Site, and Sacred Strategy*, ed. T.M. Lucas, exh. cat., Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Rome, 1990, pp. 184-185, no 15; and there is one more engraving by Cort after Federico (46,1×68,5 cm) in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. For Cort's engravings, J.C.J. Bierens de Haan, *L'oeuvre gravé de Cornelis Cort, graveur hollandais: 1533-1578*, The Hague, 1948, pp. 49-51; F.W.H. Hollstein, *Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts, ca. 1450-1700*, Amsterdam, 1949, vol. V, p. 42, no 26; *Fiamminghi a Roma, 1508-1608*, pp. 142-143, no 74. Finally, it seems that one more engraving was made by Hendrick Goltzius; Weil, 'The Relationship of the Cornaro Chapel to Mystery Plays and Italian Court Theatre', in *All the World's a Stage*, vol. II, p. 468, note 28.

¹²² The drawings that have survived include a preparatory drawing of the *Annunciation* in the Uffizi, Florence, a drawing with *Angels in the clouds* in the National Gallery of Art, in Washington, D.C., *Angels* of the left half of the lunette-shaped composition, formerly in the Rosenbach Foundation in Philadelphia (present whereabouts unknown), and *Angels* of the right half of the lunette-shaped composition was recently in the art market (present whereabouts unknown). Another drawing with Prophets is in the National Museum of Stockholm and one more with Angels in the Louvre; see W. Körte, 'Verlorene Frühwerke des Federico Zuccari in Rom', *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Instituts in Florenz*, viii, 1932, pp. 527-528, figs. 6, 7; *Renaissance into Baroque: Italian Master Drawings by the Zuccari: 1550-1600*, pp. 198-200, no. 62. Another drawing, which depicted the upper part of the composition and was in the Rosenbach collection, has recently appeared in the art market; A. Gere, 'The Lawrence-Phillipps-Rosenbach 'Zuccaro Album'', *Master Drawings*, viii, 1970, pp. 123-140, no. 10, fig. 5, and p. 128, fig. 4 which reproduced the group of angels on the left. Finally,

drawing (fig. 40) is the curious depiction of the monogram of Jesus surrounded by angels and emanating supernatural light. In both representations, the initials IHS with the cross in the middle of the letter H figure prominently and are represented in a circle. As I have already suggested, it is possible that Domenicos had access to Federico's drawings and got inspiration directly from him. It is also possible, however, that both artists studied a common source, in this case Muziano's fresco of the *Prophets holding Tablets and attended by Angels*, in the lunette above his *Rest on the Flight into Egypt* (1553-54) in S. Caterina della Ruota in Rome. Even if this were the case, the parallels between their designs confirm a shared interest in the possibilities of the motif.

Rosemarie Mulcahy has already observed that there are similarities between the still lifes of flowers in Federico's *Annunciation* (1586, Reliquary altar, basilica of El Escorial) (fig. 29) and in the painting of the same subject by El Greco (1597-1600, Museum Balaguer, Villanueva y la Geltrú) (fig. 30), as both still lifes are executed in *tromp l'oeil*¹²³. Yet, as already discussed, there were earlier points of connection between Federico and Domenicos, and El Greco's experience at the Farnese palaces in Rome and Caprarola was still very fresh when he arrived in Spain. Of all the active artists Domenicos met in Rome, Federico seems to have had the greatest impression on him, as their shared cultural refinement engendered a type of visual 'conversation' whereby the two artists emulated each other and commented on each other's work - possibly in words, most certainly in painting. Concrete evidence of their close contact is supplied not only by El Greco's marginal notes on the copy of Vasari's *Vite*, which formerly belonged to Federico, but also by the similar sources and motifs to which both turned, using and reusing figures and poses. Some of these had been initially exploited by Taddeo, with whom Federico had worked closely for fifteen years and whose influence still dominated Roman painting in the second half of the sixteenth century. Although Federico was a more established figure when he met Domenicos in Rome, there is some evidence that he became receptive to the Cretan's influence particularly after his Spanish sojourn. What we usually understand as borrowings

another drawing (17,2×10,8 cm) depicting a kneeling angel has been appeared in the art market, Galerie Siegfried Billesberger, *The Burlington Magazine*, 139, 1997, p. xxi.

¹²³ Mulcahy, *The Decoration of the Royal Basilica of El Escorial*, p. 109: "The still lifes of workbasket and vases of lilies and roses are beautifully executed. The flowers are painted with a *trompe l'oeil* effect and appear to rest on a ledge above the altar table in front of the picture, thereby forging a link between the real and supernatural worlds. El Greco may well have been influenced by this detail when he painted his ecstatic *Annunciation* in 1597-1600 where he uses still life to similar effect".

from one painter to the other seem to be more a series of responses between two companions in a mutually rewarding artistic relationship. It is this idea that forms the backdrop against which the influence of the Zuccari brothers must be considered, particularly on the way that Domenicos assimilated the Central Italian conception of dramatic narrative and worked on compositional and figural problems.

Chapter 7 - Domenicos as an Independent Master

The failure to win the patronage of Cardinal Farnese forced Domenicos to shift the course of his career once and for all and transform himself from a painter under a cardinal's protection to an independent artist. Although we cannot be sure exactly when he set up his shop in Rome, it seems likely that by the end of 1572 the painter had already established his own business, and was looking for commissions. To do so, Domenicos probably relied on his friends and acquaintances from Farnese's scholarly circle, since everyone in the city at some point counted on a patron for support, work and housing¹. Federico Zuccaro, for example, managed to survive in the Roman art market after his departure from the Caprarola decoration only because of the backing of certain Roman aristocratic families, such as the Mattei². The situation was different for Domenicos, however. Remaining outside the orbit of the Roman nobility and the papal court, the Cretan must have felt the firm pressure of competition and favouritism that dominated the broader patronage system. The present chapter will consider what Domenicos did when he left the Farnese Palace, focusing on what we know about his ambitions to set himself up as an independent master, with a workshop and assistants; while in the next chapter, I will explore what we can reconstruct about his patrons during this time, and about his oeuvre more broadly after 1572.

Membership of the Accademia di San Luca

Perhaps the most important document from this period is the record of Domenicos' enrolment in the register of the Accademia di San Luca, on September 18 1572³. This request for legal permission to practise his profession in the city offers several points for discussion, the most important of which concerns the fact that Domenicos paid the whole of his entrance fees to the guild in one go. The following analysis will attempt to demonstrate that his registration in the artists' guild just two months after his dismissal from Palazzo Farnese denotes not only that Domenicos was not thinking of leaving Rome at that point, but also that he had enough money to pay

¹ T. Dandeleit, 'Spanish Conquest and Colonization at the Center of the Old World: The Spanish Nation in Rome, 1555-1625', *Journal of Modern History*, 69, 1997, p. 488.

² Wollesen-Wisch, 'The Archiconfraternita del Gonfalone and Its Oratory in Rome', pp. 322-323.

³ D. Martinez de la Peña, 'El Greco, en la Academia de San Lucas', *Archivo español de arte*, xl, 1967, pp. 97-105, reprinted in *El Greco: Documents on His Life and Work*, pp. 97-101, where Martinez de la Peña read in the *Libro antico degl' Accademici ed Aggregati*: "de[ve] far", instead of "de[ve] dar".

his membership to the guild and consequently set up his own business. Moreover, by examining Domenicos' enrolment I seek to refute the theory that the Cretan was registered as a miniaturist and not as a painter, and that he paid the total amount owed to the guild because he was planning to return to Venice⁴.

El Greco's name appears twice in the documents of the Accademia, namely in the *Libro antico degl' Accademici ed Aggregati* and in the *Registro antico*. In the *Libro antico*, the entry reads as follows: 'M. Dominico Greco de[ve] da[re] p[er] il suo introito del arte scudi dua-2' ('M. Dominico the Greek must give two scudi for his entry ...2'); and on the opposite page, on the right, we read 'M. Dominico Greco pittor a dato p[er] tutto il suo introito del arte scudi dua a me pietro anto[nio] console a di 18 s[e]t[embre] 1572...-2' ('M. Dominico the Greek, painter, paid for the whole amount of his entry two *scudi* to me Pietro Antonio, consul, on the day of 18th September 1572 ...-2')⁵. In the *Registro antico*, the following reference is found: 'Dominico greco pittor a carte... folio 63' ('Dominico the Greek painter at page... folio 63')⁶. While the *Libro antico* is a huge book which includes all the register entries of the artists who participated in the guild from 1535 to 1653, the *Registro antico* is a small book which contains the names of artists registered in the above-mentioned years, in alphabetical order, classifying them by their first name, and not by their surname. On the first page of the *Libro antico* we read that the *Registro antico* was drawn up because it was difficult for the consul ('consolo') of the Academy to remember which artists had paid their dues to the guild⁷. In other words, the *Registro antico* is a catalogue with artists' names designed to assist the consul to control the membership of the guild; it is supplementary to the *Libro antico*. For example, in the *Registro antico* under the letter 'D', we read 'Dominico greco' and 'Dominico spagnolo', while under the letter 'G' we find 'Giovanni de Vecchi dal

⁴ For Domenicos' second stay in Venice, see L. Puppi, 'Ancora sul soggiorno italiano del Greco', in *El Greco of Crete: Proceedings of the International Symposium*, pp. 251-254; Puppi, 'Il duplice soggiorno veneziano del Greco', in *El Greco in Italy and Italian Art: Proceedings of the International Symposium*, pp. 345-356; Puppi, 'El Greco in Italy and Italian Art', in *El Greco: Identity and Transformation*, pp. 95-113.

⁵ *Libro antico degl' Accademici ed Aggregati 1535-1653*, vol. II, fol. 62v-63r.

⁶ *Registro antico degl' Accademici ed Aggregati: 1500-1600*, folio corrispondente al lettere D.

⁷ *Libro antico degl' Accademici ed Aggregati 1535-1653*, vol. II, fol. 2: "...perche uno consolo quando pigliava l' ufficio non posseva senza gran fatica sapere chi p[er] [g]li detti introitj fusse debitore se prima non leggeva tuttj li libri e poi che letti li aveva era ancora difficile tenerli a memoria così ponendo jo in questo p[er] ordine dello stratto quale al principio del libro con l' alfabeto troverrete, non sara altra fatica, che guardare qual lettera con incomincia el nome di quella persona che lui vorrà trovare, et quella li mostrera a qua le carte del presente libro abbia trovarlo dove vedeva se luj è debitore o no è di quanto". See also, M. Missirini, *Memorie per servire alla storia della Romana Accademia di S. Luca fino alla morte di Antonio Canova*, Rome, 1823, p. 13.

Borgo', and so forth. In most cases, the phrase 'a carte' appears next to the artist's name, followed by a number. The number written corresponds to the relevant page in the *Libro antico degl' Accademici ed Aggregati*, where the names of the artists are recorded together with the money they owed to the guild.

As mentioned above Domenicos' name appears in the *Registro antico* as 'Dominico greco pittor a carte... folio 63'⁸. What is of particular interest in this entry is the word 'pittor', because it raises the question of whether El Greco was registered as painter or as a miniaturist, as has been often argued⁹. The confusion concerning Domenicos' profession has been caused because the phrase 'a carte' written next to his profession in the *Registro antico* has been translated together with the word 'pittor', namely 'pittor a carte', miniaturist. Yet, the phrase 'a carte' is related to the word 'folio' that follows, and should be translated as 'at page'. Besides, the Latin phrase 'folium charte', from which the phrase 'a carte folio' originates, was used with the same meaning, 'at page', indicating the relevant page. In addition, the number written next to the phrase 'a carte ...folio 63' clearly corresponds to the relevant page in the *Libro antico*. For example, the number 63 next to the name of Domenicos in the *Registro antico* tallies with page 63 in the *Libro antico* where we again find the name of the Cretan. More important, however, is the fact that the artists' names appear on the list together with their profession. For example, a man named Aloisio was registered in the *Libro antico* (page 59v-60r) as follows: 'Aloisio miniatore deve dare scudi dua per conto del suo introito' ('the miniaturist Aloisio must give two *scudi* for his entry')¹⁰. In this case, as in others, the profession 'miniature' is clearly stated. Thus, according to the *Registro antico*, we can assume with certainty that Domenicos was registered as a painter ('pittor') and not as a miniaturist.

The second thorny issue concerning Domenicos' registration involves his paying off the total amount of his dues, and the fact that his name never appears again

⁸ *Registro antico dagl' Accademici ed Aggregati: 1500-1600*, folio corrispondente al lettere D.

⁹ Brown, 'El Greco and Toledo', in *El Greco of Toledo*, p. 81: "...El Greco entered as a miniaturist painter..."; L. Puppi, 'El Greco's Two Sojourns in Venice', in *El Greco in Italy and Italian Art*, p. 395: "in 1572 he registered in the Academy of Saint Luke as pictor a cartibus and this in itself opens a field of research..."; L. Puppi, 'Il duplice soggiorno veneziano del Greco', in *El Greco in Italy and Italian Art: Proceedings of the International Symposium*, p. 352: "sono convinto che il Theotocopoulos sia partito da Roma sul finire del 1573 - dopo essersi iscritto, sorprendentemente, il 18 settembre 1572, come 'miniature', all' Accademia di San Luca..."; Puppi, 'El Greco in Italy and Italian Art', in *El Greco: Identity and Transformation*, p. 103: "...that Theotocopoulos's enrolment in the Accademia di San Luca (as 'pictor a cartibus', miniaturist: owing to his mastery in small paintings?) on 18 September 1572...".

¹⁰ *Libro antico degl' Accademici ed Aggregati 1535-1653*, vol. II, fol. 59v-60r.

in the register of the guild. This fact has fired a theory, first presented by L. Zottman in a series of articles in *Die Christliche Kunst* from December 1906 to July 1907, that the painter went back to Venice for a second time from 1572 to 1576¹¹. The possibility of a second sojourn in Venice, supported by Ellis Waterhouse and Rodolfo Pallucchini¹², has recently been re-stated by the Italian art historian Lionello Puppi, who based his arguments on the above-mentioned entry, together with Domenicos' stylistic development, and on certain annotations on his copy of Vasari's *Vite*¹³. A second sojourn in Venice has also been closely related to remarks by the Sienese physician Giulio Mancini (1559-1630), who alleged in his *Considerazioni sulla pittura* (c.1619-1621) that Domenicos was forced to leave Rome due to his negative comments on Michelangelo's *Last Judgment*¹⁴. It is my contention, however, that Domenicos paid the total amount of his dues because he was determined to stay and pursue a career as an independent master in Rome.

Not all artists were in a position to pay the whole two *scudi* on entering the guild. In the *Libro antico*, we usually read the name of the same artist more than once on different dates and in connection with different sums of money. For example, the painter Giovanni de' Vecchi appears for the first time on August 7 1570, when he paid one *scudo*, that is, half of his membership fees, and his name reappears eight years later, on January 6 1578, when he paid off the money he owed to the guild, namely one more *scudo*¹⁵. The same happened with other artists, including a painter named Marcantonio Romano, who paid 50 *giuli* in September 1571, 50 more *giuli* three years later (October 1574), 30 *giuli* in 1575, and the last 70 *giuli* in August

¹¹ Álvarez Lopera, 'The Construction of a Painter: A Century of Searching for and Interpreting El Greco', in *El Greco: Identity and Transformation*, pp. 34-36.

¹² Waterhouse, 'El Greco's Italian Period', p. 66: "Perhaps the most significant conclusion we might draw from Mancini... is that El Greco may possibly have left Rome about the end of 1572". Pallucchini insisted on Domenicos' second sojourn to Venice; R. Pallucchini, *La giovinezza del Tintoretto*, Milan, 1950, pp. 58-59; R. Pallucchini, 'New Light upon El Greco's Early Career', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, xl, 1952, pp. 47-56; R. Pallucchini, 'Opere giovanili firmate e datate del Greco', *Arte Veneta*, vi, 1952, pp. 140-148; R. Pallucchini, 'La vicenda italiana del Greco', *Paragone*, 45, 1953, pp. 24-39, where he writes: "Ritengo probabile l'ipotesi del Waterhouse che il Greco sia ritornato a Venezia dopo il '72: se non è necessario oggi ammettere che il Greco sia stato a Parma", (*ibid*, p. 35).

¹³ Puppi, 'El Greco's Two Sojourns in Venice' in *El Greco in Italy and Italian Art*, pp. 393-396; Puppi, 'Il duplice soggiorno veneziano del Greco', in *El Greco in Italy and Italian Art: Proceedings of the International Symposium*, pp. 352-356; Álvarez Lopera, 'The Construction of a Painter: A Century of Searching for and Interpreting El Greco', in *El Greco: Identity and Transformation*, p. 36.

¹⁴ Mancini, *Considerazioni sulla pittura*, vol. I, pp. 230-231, [f. 65v.]; Puppi, 'El Greco's Two Sojourns in Venice' in *El Greco in Italy and Italian Art*, p. 396: "I am convinced that Theotocopoulos left Rome around the end of 1572 as a result of the polemics around Michelangelo's *Last Judgement*... I am also convinced that he returned to Venice, from where he would leave for Spain the day after Titian lost his life..."

¹⁵ *Libro antico degl' Accademici ed Aggregati 1535-1653*, vol. II, fol. 58v-59r.

1576¹⁶. The painter Giovanni Battista Lombardelli from the Marches also paid in instalments, giving 50 *giuli* in September 1570, 50 *giuli* in February 1577 and 50 *giuli* more in October 1580¹⁷. Another example is the painter Michele Alberti, who paid 50 *giuli* in July 1571, 50 *giuli* in August 1576 and the last *scudo* of his membership fees in November 1577¹⁸. Other examples can be cited, but they will not alter the picture that is forming, namely that the reappearance of an artist's name in the *Libro antico* should not be considered as a new registration, but as an updated record of his financial obligations to the guild.

As we have already established in the *Libro antico* at page 63 on the left we read 'M. Dominico greco de[ve] dar[e] p[er] il suo introito del arte scudi dua ...2' and on the opposite page, on the right, 'M. Dominico greco pittor a dato p[er] tutto il suo introito del arte scudi dua a me pietro anto[nio] consolo a di 18 s[e]t[embre] 1572 ...2'¹⁹. The number '-2' indicates the sum of two *scudi* paid by the painter. Crossed lines have been drawn on top of both phrases on the left and right pages of the book, which have encouraged some art historians to think that the painter's name was deleted from the guild's register, and that he must have left the city²⁰. These lines do not seem to have signified that the painter stopped being a member of the guild, but rather that Domenicos simply did not have any unsettled financial business with the guild. As a result, his name does not appear in the registry again. Although Domenicos' case is unusual, it is not unique. During the decade 1570-1580, five more artists, of the 86 who were registered in the *Libro antico*²¹, paid the total amount of their dues to the guild. These were: the architect Martino Longi (d. 1591), who paid off his dues on October 18 1575²²; the Bolognese painter Lorenzo Sabatini (c.1530-1576), who was Vasari's assistant at the Sala Regia during the pontificate of Pius V and who was called back together with Vasari by Gregory XIII to complete the Sala

¹⁶ *Ibid*, fol. 61v.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, fol. 60v-61r.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, fol. 60v-61r.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, fol. 62v-63r.

²⁰ See above notes 4, 12.

²¹ *Libro antico degl' Accademici ed Aggregati 1535-1653*, vol. II, fol. 58v-79r.

²² *Ibid*, fol. 67v-68r; Thieme-Becker, *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler*, vol. XXIII, p. 335; Hunter, *Girolamo Siciolante pittore da Sermoneta (1521-1575)*, pp. 175, 248; Longo designed several buildings in Rome, such as the Cappella Cesi in S. Maria Maggiore, the Palazzetto Cenci (1579), the church of S. Girolamo degli Schiavoni (1588-1590), the Chiesa Nuova, and the *altana* on top of Palazzo Altemps; for the latter see F. Scoppola & S. D. Vordemann, *Palazzo Altemps*, Rome, 1997, p. 14.

Regia and Cappella Paolina in 1573 (he paid off his dues in 1575²³); the painter Giacomo Sattarelli (on March 24 1577)²⁴; the painter [Giovanni] Battista Cavagna (d. 1613)²⁵ (on May 28 1578); and the painter Cesare da Orvieto, i.e. Nebbia (January 28 1579)²⁶.

Thus, the fact that El Greco paid the total amount of his dues – two *scudi* - to the guild was neither self-evident, nor financially straightforward. It should be recalled that the salary of an architect such as Giovanni Antonio Dosio, who was working on the papal fortifications at Anagni in 1564, was initially eight *scudi* per month and later 10 *scudi* per month²⁷. For the well-known architect and antiquarian, Pirro Ligorio, who was chief architect at St. Peter's in 1564-1566, the salary was twenty-five *scudi* per month, while for Vignola, who had been hired as a second architect under Ligorio, the salary was half that of Ligorio, that is, twelve and a half *scudi*²⁸. And architecture was exceptionally profitable compared with painting²⁹. Given that the cost of living in Rome was twice as high as that of other cities in Italy, such as Ferrara³⁰ and Florence³¹, we can infer that the artists who could afford to pay off the total amount of their membership fees were few. These were the ones who had established a good reputation and were quite well-off: Martino Longi, for example, who had a rather successful career in Rome, or Lorenzo Sabatini, who was involved

²³ *Libro antico degl' Accademici ed Aggregati 1535-1653*, vol. II, fol. 68v-69r. For Sabatini see Strinati, 'Gli anni difficili di Federico Zuccaro', p. 99.

²⁴ *Libro antico degl' Accademici ed Aggregati 1535-1653*, vol. II, fol. 73v-74r; the painter Giovanni Satarelli was either a relative of Giacomo Satarelli or one and the same person; Giacomo Satarelli worked on the ceiling of the nave of S. Maria in Aracoeli together with Cesare and Gregorio Trapassi and Siciolante da Sermoneta in 1573-1575; Hunter, *Girolamo Siciolante pittore da Sermoneta*, p. 173, note 7.

²⁵ *Libro antico degl' Accademici ed Aggregati 1535-1653*, vol. II, fol. 75v-76r; for Giovanni Battista Cavagna, Thieme-Becker, *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler*, vol. VI, pp. 211-212. Cavagna was consul in the Accademia di San Luca from October 1581 to October 1582, succeeding Federico Zuccaro in this post; S. Wegner, 'Further Notes on Francesco Vanni's Works for Roman Patrons', *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, xxiii, 1979, pp. 314, 322, note 20.

²⁶ *Libro antico degl' Accademici ed Aggregati 1535-1653*, vol. II, fol. 77v-78r.

²⁷ Valone, 'Giovanni Antonio Dosio: The Roman Years', p. 531

²⁸ For Ligorio and Vignola, Coffin, *Pirro Ligorio: The Renaissance Artist, Architect, and Antiquarian*, p. 68. Later, Ligorio was hired as an antiquarian to the Duke of Ferrara with a monthly stipend of 25 *scudi* (*ibid*, p. 80).

²⁹ For example, Bartholomeus Spranger was paid 13 *scudi* for two months' work at Caprarola in 1569, while Bertoja's salary was arranged to have been either 15 *scudi* per month plus expenses or 20 *scudi* a month including expenses in July 1572; DeGrazia, *Bertoia, Mirola and the Farnese Court*, p. 74; Wollesen-Wisch, 'The Archiconfraternita del Gonfalone and Its Oratory in Rome', pp. 125-126.

³⁰ J. Delumeau, *Vie économique et sociale de Rome dans la second moitié du XVIe siècle*, Paris, 1959, vol. II, pp. 694, 697, 700; Coffin, *Pirro Ligorio: The Renaissance Artist, Architect, and Antiquarian*, p. 80.

³¹ G. Fragnito, 'Cardinals' Courts in Sixteenth-Century Rome', *The Journal of Modern History*, 65, 1993, p. 42: "Although Cardinal Del Monte enjoyed the hospitality of Cardinal Giovanni Ricci, he claimed that living in Rome under Pius V cost him three times more than living in Florence...".

in a number of decorative programmes for Gregory XIII, including the prestigious Cappella Paolina (1573-1576), and received a salary of 33 *scudi* per month, plus the expenses for his assistant³².

The payment of Domenicos' dues to the guild leads us to the next question, namely whether the Cretan left Rome after 1572. If the Greek painter intended to go back to Venice, he could have left immediately after his dismissal from Palazzo Farnese, without paying the significant sum of two *scudi* to the Roman guild. Moreover, as the preparations for the Holy Year of 1575 were well under way, national confraternities, flagellant companies, guilds, friars and monks were all preparing to participate in processions through the city and to offer lodgings to thousands of pilgrims and visitors³³. It was a great chance for new commissions, especially when churches and oratories were already starting to be renovated, and certainly not the right time for anyone involved in the art business to leave Rome. More experienced and better connected than when he first set his foot in Rome, Domenicos probably still viewed the city as teeming with opportunity for him. This may explain the fact that he went on to hire two assistants, as will be discussed in the following pages.

Before turning to the organization of the painter's studio, however, it will be useful to examine briefly Mancini's anecdote and refute the theory that Domenicos departed from Rome because he infuriated the painters there with his offer to repaint Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* with 'honesty and decency' ('con honestà et decenza') and equal mastery, if the entire fresco was demolished³⁴. Although Mancini's description of Domenicos' life contains some interesting observations – based on information almost certainly proffered by his compatriot Lattanzio Bonastri, who was Domenicos' pupil-assistant – the account of El Greco's alleged criticism of Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* is vague in its details. For one thing, Mancini does not

³² M. Kuntz, 'Vincenzo Borghini and Giorgio Vasari: Two Drawings for the Cappella Paolina', *The Burlington Magazine*, 141, 1999, pp. 592-597, esp. p. 597, note 32.

³³ Wollesen-Wisch, 'The Archiconfraternita del Gonfalone and Its Oratory in Rome', pp. 33-50.

³⁴ Mancini, *Considerazioni sulla pittura*, vol. I, pp. 230-231, [f. 65v.]: "Onde, venendo l'occasione di coprir alcune figure del Giudizio di Michelangelo che da Pio erano state stimate indecenti per quel luogo, proruppe in dir che, se si buttasse a terra tutta l'opera, l'haverebbe fatta con honestà et decenza non inferiore a quella di bontà di pittura. Onde, provocatisi tutti i pittori e quelli che si diletano di questa professione, gli fu necessario andarsene in Spagna...".

remember Domenicos' original name³⁵, and omits other significant details of his life in Rome, giving the impression that the biography of the painter is unpolished overall. While the doctor's account of contemporary painters can be fairly reliable, he is not equally trustworthy as a source of information on older masters, of whom he does not have first-hand knowledge. His propensity to include anecdotes and gossip in his biographies, as he clearly did in El Greco's case, moreover casts serious doubts on the accuracy of his information³⁶. Besides, Mancini's competence to write a treatise on art had already been questioned by his contemporaries. An anonymous author, who may be identified with Giovanni Pietro Bellori, wrote that Mancini had no idea about artistic matters³⁷, and the Florentine Filippo Baldinucci accused him of bias since, in his opinion, Mancini was carried away by both his passion against Vasari and his love for Siena³⁸. Despite Mancini's allegations of El Greco's arrogance, the Sienese doctor remains silent about how the painter was making a living in the city, or for whom he worked. Considering the above deficiencies, Mancini's account of El Greco's alleged comments on Michelangelo should not be taken at face value.

As we have seen, Domenicos did not leave the Farnese household on good terms, and he probably never restored his relations with the cardinal. That Domenicos knew his worth, and could afford the risk of working in Rome's competitive environment as an independent painter, is indicated by the fact that he covered the cost of his registration fees in September of 1572. Such information is evidently of great importance because it begs the question of where Domenicos found the money to pay the artists' guild, given that he had not organised his workshop yet, and the living costs, such as food, rent, heat and his personal expenses, including clothing and materials for his art, were quite high³⁹. It is unlikely that he had received money from Fulvio Orsini during his stay at Palazzo Farnese for the paintings listed in the scholar's inventory. It makes more sense that these would have been given as gifts, as

³⁵ Mancini leaves lacuna next to the painter's name twice, *ibid*, vol. I, p. 230, [f. 65v.]: "Di *** detto comunemente il Greco/ Sotto il pontificato di Pio V di s.m. venne a Roma *** che per tal rispetto comunemente era chiamato il Greco...".

³⁶ D. Mahon, 'Notes on the Manuscripts of Mancini's *Trattato*', in *Studies in Seicento Art and Theory*, London, 1947, pp. 279-331, esp. p. 327: "Thoroughness and reliability cannot be counted among Mancini's virtues; his methods are slipshod and he often plays fast and loose with facts"; p. 329, note 176.

³⁷ J. Hess, 'Note Manciniane', *Münchener Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst*, xix, 1968, pp. 115-116.

³⁸ F. Baldinucci, *Notizie dei professori del disegno da Cimabue in qua*, Florence, 1681, ed. F. Ranalli, Florence, 1846, p. 66.

³⁹ R.E. Spear, 'Scrambling for Scudi: Notes on Painters' Earnings in Early Baroque Rome', *The Art Bulletin*, 85, 2003, p. 312.

tokens of friendship to Orsini, who gave him the opportunity to meet important people and pursue higher intellectual ideals. It is equally unlikely that he received money from Cardinal Farnese for the two paintings listed in his inventory. Instead these paintings probably represented a way for the painter to express his gratitude toward his potential patron, while showcasing his talent and learning. Similarly, it is improbable that he received financial help from his brother, Manoussos, since the latter was in serious trouble at the time. In November 1572⁴⁰ he had been imprisoned in Candia, and only returned to Venice in 1573, where he sought help for his problems⁴¹.

The fact that Domenicos had the capital to pay his registration fees in September 1572 suggests that he was in rather good financial health at the time, and the most likely reason for this was that he had gained a commission for a picture. If this was indeed the case, and he was approached with a commission while still in the cardinal's household, this may well have led to his expulsion, particularly if it was felt that he had betrayed the trust of his benefactor. When his stay at the Palazzo Farnese came to an end, Domenicos no doubt pinned his hopes on private patrons, who could procure him commissions for churches and oil paintings as the Holy Year of 1575 was approaching.

Setting up a workshop

Domenicos' registration to the Academy of St. Luke gave him the legal permission to operate his own studio, hire assistants, and tap into Rome's market by following the *modus operandi* of local artists. His membership in the guild was no guarantee of financial success or public advancement; the guild, however, had regulatory and financial tasks, including the oversight of pricing through appraisals ('stime') and the adjudication of disputes between artists and their clients. Organising a workshop was a risky enterprise that demanded a steady flow of commissions to cover fixed costs, such as labour, rent and materials, and avoid the accumulation of debts. Although we are not sufficiently informed about where the painter settled in

⁴⁰ Manoussos arrived in Venice in October 1571 "for some extremely important business of his", Panayotakis, 'Manoussos the Pirate: 1571-1572', in *El Greco in Italy and Italian Art: Proceedings of the International Symposium*, p. 18. Later on March 31, 1572, Venice gave him a warship to form a private pirate flotilla, but things did not go well and in the beginning of November of 1572 he was imprisoned for three months in the flagship prison (*ibid*, pp. 21-21).

⁴¹ *Ibid*, p. 21; it is not certain whether or not the trial took place. On November 16, 1573 Manoussos obtained permission to go back to Crete.

Rome after leaving Palazzo Farnese, we can speculate on the location of his studio. Given that Domenicos later moved to Spain, it follows that he must have cultivated ties during these years with members of the Spanish community in Rome, and it may be the case that this was reflected in where he chose to operate. The presence of the Spanish faction was stronger and more distinct in the Parione district, the area that included Piazza Navona and Piazza S. Pantaleo, than in other *rioni*. Piazza Navona, in particular, had become a Spanish ‘hot spot’, since their national church, S. Giacomo degli Spanogli⁴², and the residence of the Spanish ambassador, Juan de Zúñiga (1568-1574)⁴³, were situated there. Moreover, this wider area near Palazzo Farnese was well known to Domenicos and relatively cheap to rent lodgings in⁴⁴. The place was also convenient because it allowed him to remain close to Fulvio Orsini and to seek his prospective clients among the many gentlemen, churchmen and merchants who retained extensive households in the vicinity⁴⁵. On the other hand, it is possible that Domenicos would have preferred to be close to other artists, in which case he may have settled in the Campo Marzio, a popular area for painters⁴⁶, or in the neighbourhood near S. Ambrogio al Corso, where Federico Zuccaro rented a house⁴⁷.

This leads us to the next question regarding his living and working conditions after 1572. Like most painters, Domenicos probably worked at home⁴⁸, and as an artist of high ambition he would have defended the quality of his art by negotiating the price of his works. This would have been determined by the time he spent on a

⁴² Dandeleet, *Spanish Rome: 1500-1700*, pp. 32, 127; there were two more national churches for the Iberians S. Antonio and S. Maria de Montserrat for the Portuguese and Catalans respectively, but they were both in decline during this period (*ibid*, p. 115).

⁴³ *Ibid*, p. 128. These places seem to have bound the Spanish immigrants together, allowing them to develop a sense of collective identity (*ibid*, pp. 44-45, 113-121). Dandeleet, ‘Spanish Conquest and Colonization at the Center of the Old World: The Spanish Nation in Rome, 1555-1625’, p. 506: “Working-class Spaniards were present in all of the neighbourhoods of Rome ...26% residing in the rione of Campo Marzio...Another 26% lived in the three adjacent rione of Ponte, Parione, and Santo Eustachio, where the ambassador’s palace, the Fonseca palace, and the church of Santiago were also located”.

⁴⁴ Spear, ‘Scrambling for Scudi: Notes on Painters’ Earnings in Early Baroque Rome’, p. 312: “The rent in the cheaper quarters of Rome was about 12 scudi a year, a bit more in the Via Giulia, from 25 to 30 scudi a year in the area of the Via della Scrofa and in the fancy zone...the streets near the Trinità dei Monti...rents were about 35 to 40 scudi a year, peaking at 100”.

⁴⁵ For the rione Parione see A. Esposito, *Un’ altra Roma: Minoranze nazionali e comunità ebraiche tra Medioevo e Rinascimento*, Rome, 1995, pp. 31-41.

⁴⁶ Spear, ‘Rome: Setting the Stage’, in *Painting for Profit*, p. 43: “...Campo Marzio, a central *rione* or region of Rome consisting of the parishes of S. Maria del Popolo, S. Andrea delle Fratte, and S. Lorenzo in Lucina, Rome’s preferred neighborhoods for artists”.

⁴⁷ Aurigemma, ‘Lettere di Federico Zuccari’, pp. 207, 208 note 4; p. 210, note 13.

⁴⁸ G. Panofsky, ‘Tommaso della Porta’s Castles in the Air’, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 56, 1993, pp. 119-167, esp. pp. 142-143; C.D. Dickerson III, ‘The inventory of the Estate of Camillo Mariani’, *The Burlington Magazine*, 147, 2005, pp. 821-824, esp. p. 823.

painting, its subject and size, the number of figures in it, and certainly by his reputation⁴⁹. And yet, not one payment for any of his Roman paintings before or after 1572 has come to light. We do know, however, that he employed two assistants, presumably successively, suggesting that he was gaining work, or at least he was expecting to. We know that Lattanzio Bonastri⁵⁰ (c.1548 -c.1585/87) from Lucignano joined his studio because Mancini mentioned the Greek painter as Bonastri's master in the latter's biography⁵¹. And we also know that the rather obscure Francesco Preboste (c.1554?-c.1607?) joined the Cretan's studio in Rome - later following him to Spain and acting as his business agent - by virtue of certain documents regarding Domenicos' activities in Toledo⁵². No records about Domenicos' workshop practices in Rome have come down to us, however, so we must rely on circumstantial evidence to reflect on his creative processes during these years. Comparison with other contemporary workshops in Rome, analysis of Bonastri's later career, as well as examination of the 1614 inventory of El Greco's possessions in Spain, may illuminate some of his activities in Rome.

Assistants were usually engaged in grinding and mixing colours, stretching canvases, and doing whatever a master needed. As was usual, Domenicos would have offered room, board and a living wage to his pupil-assistants. While most masters paid their assistants around 3 *giuli* a day⁵³, others were more generous: Girolamo Muziano, for example, paid his assistants six *scudi* a month, which at that time was a large sum⁵⁴. How much El Greco would have paid his pupils is hard to say, because it is not certain when, if at all, his apprentices became assistants, and how much they

⁴⁹ Sohm, 'Introduction', in *Painting for Profit*, p. 23.

⁵⁰ Mancini, *Considerazioni sulla pittura*, vol. I, p. 230, [f. 65]; the first who referred to Bonastri was R. Longhi, 'Il soggiorno romano del Greco', *L'Arte*, xvii, 1914, p. 301-303; for Bonastri see also, *DBI*, vol. XI, p. 594; A.G. Xydis, «Ανέκδοτος βίος του Γκρέκο», *Kritika Chronika*, I-II, 1959, pp. 218-225, esp. note 18, in *El Greco: Documents on His Life and Work*, pp. 92-96.

⁵¹ Mancini, *Considerazioni sulla pittura*, vol. I, pp. 229-230, [f. 64-65], esp. 230, [f. 65]: "...sotto la disciplina di quel Greco che operò con la maniera di Titiano e poi morte in Spagna fece tal progresso che fu chiamato a Siena ad operar per la Confraternita di S. Caterina in Fonte Branda".

⁵² De Borja de San Román y Fernández, *El Greco en Toledo*, pp. 142, 155-156 in *El Greco: Documents on His Life and Work*, pp. 247, 253-254; Preboste was some thirteen years younger than El Greco and his name disappears from documents after April 1607; De Borja de San Román y Fernández, 'De la vida del Greco', pp. 4-5, in *El Greco: Documents on His Life and Work*, p. 339; Brown, 'El Greco and Toledo', in *El Greco of Toledo*, p. 105; the exhibition catalogue *El Greco*, [New York/London, 2004], p. 33 gives a different date for Preboste's birth, c.1528.

⁵³ Spear, 'Rome: Setting the Stage', in *Painting for Profit*, p. 45; Spear, 'Scrambling for Scudi: Notes on Painters' Earnings in Early Baroque Rome', p. 315, where is mentioned the case of an unknown Spanish painter who came to Rome and was taken on by Antiveduto Grammatica for 25 *baiocchi* a day.

⁵⁴ Spear, 'Rome: Setting the Stage', in *Painting for Profit*, p. 45.

were involved in the production of what passed for the master's own work. However, if nothing is known about Preboste's activities in Rome, we know a fair amount about those of Bonastri, because his life was recorded by Giulio Mancini in the *Considerazioni sulla pittura*. Mancini seems to have been a reliable source of information about Bonastri, since they both came from the area around Siena and knew each other well. Yet, it is not clear exactly when Bonastri joined Domenicos' studio and whether he preceded Preboste or not⁵⁵.

According to Mancini, the young painter joined Domenicos' studio as an apprentice ('sotto la disciplina di quel Greco') and went on to evolve his own artistic personality after leaving the Cretan's employ, unlike Preboste. But Mancini's account raises questions for which it has been difficult to find answers; for instance, why El Greco? It is perhaps surprising that, on arriving in Rome, Bonastri joined the studio of a foreigner, rather than the workshop of a Siennese master, such as Marco Pino (1521-1583), who was working in the Gonfalone around 1575⁵⁶, or that of another Italian, which would have been more usual. From a study of Bonastri's existing paintings, I would suggest that this decision was influenced by the reputation that the Cretan had established in the city as a learned artist and accomplished portraitist. Indeed Mancini would single out the verisimilitude of the contemporary portraits which Bonastri included in his painting of *St. Catherine with the Thieves* (fig. 44)⁵⁷, executed for the

⁵⁵ Mancini, *Considerazioni sulla pittura*, vol. I, pp. 229-230. Mancini first recorded that Lattanzio's style approached that of his compatriot (and presumably his first master) 'mastro Nicolaio' who was working in Città della Pieve, a provincial town not far from Lucignano; *ibid*, p. 229: "Coetaneo et quasi paesano e vicin nell'operare di mastro Nicolaio detto fu Lattantio Buonastri..."; Willumsen identified 'mastro Nicolaio' as Niccolò Circignani, known as il Pomarancio (c.1517/20-c.1594/96); Willumsen, *La jeunesse du peintre El Greco*, vol. I, pp. 447-473. Circignani, who was not an inventive but certainly a prolific artist, had worked in Rome in 1562-1564 in the Sala Grande of the Belvedere (now part of the Museo Etrusco), and again almost twenty years later in the decoration of Torre dei Venti in the Vatican (1580-1582), in the Oratorio S. Marcello, in S. Giovanni dei Fiorentini (1583-1585), in the Jesuit church of S. Stefano Rotondo, and in many other churches in Rome.

⁵⁶ Marco Pino was painting the *Resurrection of Christ* and the figures of the attic above in the Gonfalone, but art historians have not agreed on the date of the *Resurrection*; Wollesen-Wisch, 'The Archiconfraternita del Gonfalone and its Oratory in Rome', pp. 248-249. If Marco Pino was absent from Rome during the years 1573-1575, this may explain why Bonastri did not join him; see also E. Borea, 'Grazia e furia in Marco Pino', *Paragone*, 151, 1962, pp. 24-52.

⁵⁷ Mancini *Considerazioni sulla pittura*, vol. I, p. 230: "...per la Confraternita di S. Caterina in Fonte Branda, dove condusse un quadro d'un miracolo della Santa...E, quello che è di maraviglia, vi sono alcuni ritratti...tanto ben fatti che, chi ha conosciuto l'un e l'altro, è di maraviglia il veder..."; Willumsen mentioned a manuscript by Ettore Romagnoli in the Library of Siena with the title *Biografia Cronologica de' Belli artisti senesi dal secolo XII a tutto il XVIII divisa in XII volumi, etc...Opera d' Ettore Romagnoli Senese, etc...Autografi donati alla Biblioteca di Siena dallo scrittore nel 1835*, where in volume VIII with the subtitle *Biografia degli artisti senesi fioristi dall'Anno 1570 al 1587*, Romagnoli referred to Bonastri; Willumsen, *La jeunesse du peintre El Greco*, vol. I, p. 451; Willumsen corrected Romagnoli when the latter wrote that Bonastri joined Domenicos' studio in Venice.

Oratory of the Sanctuary of St. Catherine in Siena in 1578⁵⁸. The inclusion of these portraits on the left of his picture, which results in a rather claustrophobically crowded composition, suggests that portraiture was a key aspect of the artist's training in El Greco's workshop. It has also been suggested that Lattanzio included his own self-portrait among the figures in the picture, along with a likeness of Domenicos himself⁵⁹. Indeed on the far left corner of the painting, almost hidden under the arm of a mounted soldier, Lattanzio has painted two male portraits dressed in contemporary clothing in a manner reminiscent of El Greco's use of contemporary figures in his religious paintings. The man who has been identified with Domenicos is not unlike the figure depicted in modern garb, with a moustache, trimmed beard and receding hairline in the left-hand group of portraits in the Parma *Christ Healing the Blind*⁶⁰. In Lattanzio's picture, the same man is shown in full face with big, clear eyes, long bony nose, and thin lips, slightly parted in a light smile. His head is lit from the right so that the cheek on the left side is silhouetted against a dark background, while the steady and persistent stare of the sitter towards the viewer suggests that he is interested in us. Whether or not the figure can indeed be identified with Domenicos is open for debate, as there are no certified portraits of the artist from this period. On the other hand, the suggestion is not wholly unreasonable if one compares the features of Lattanzio's sitter with those of other figures in El Greco's oeuvre thought to record the artist's likeness. The supposed self-portraits in the *Burial of the Count of Orgaz* (1586-1588) and a *Portrait of a Man* (1595-1600, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)⁶¹, for instance, when the Cretan was in his mid-forties to mid-fifties, display a not dissimilar set of features: large eyes, long nose and a receding hairline.

The Siena commission was an important one for the relatively unknown Bonastri⁶², who was paid 160 *lire* for the picture of *St. Catherine with the Thieves* and

⁵⁸ W. Chandler Kirwin, 'The Oratory of the Sanctuary of Saint Catherine in Siena', *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, xvi, 1972, pp. 199-220, esp. pp. 202, 204, fig. 3.

⁵⁹ Willumsen, *La jeunesse du peintre El Greco*, vol. I, p. 470

⁶⁰ Art historians disagree about the identity of this man as well of the younger on the far left who look at the spectator; Puppi, 'El Greco in Italy and Italian Art', in *El Greco: Identity and Transformation*, p. 111; Álvarez Lopera, *ibid*, p. 368 with previous bibliography.

⁶¹ The Metropolitan portrait, which has been identified as a self-portrait, depicts an almost balding man; *El Greco*, [New York/London, 2004], pp. 271-272, cat. no 75.

⁶² It is possible that Bartolommeo Neroni (c.1505/1515- before 1571), known as *il Riccio*, played a role in Bonastri being commissioned for *St. Catherine with the Thieves*, since Neroni was responsible for the decoration of the Oratory. It is known that Bonastri had kept ties with his compatriots, including Neroni, in whose second wedding with the sister of Michelangelo Anselmi, Bonastri was present; Mancini, *Considerazioni sulla pittura*, vol. I, pp. 193-195, in the *Life of Bartholomeo Neroni detto il*

smaller canvas depicting the Blessed Ambrose Sansedoni, which was placed between his *St. Catherine* and the altar wall⁶³. It is worth noting, however, that the payment Bonastri received for the *St. Catherine*, which is a large picture (3.50×2.92cm), was markedly lower than the fees painters would normally have accepted; a fact probably attributable to his limited reputation⁶⁴. However, the large size of the canvas and the number of figures depicted clearly indicate that Bonastri was quite capable of handling multi-figured scenes of this size, a skill that he must have learnt during his training in Domenicos' studio.

On closer inspection, an important detail in Bonastri's painting furnishes further evidence of his debt to Domenicos, and provides some intriguing suggestions as to how the Cretan may have organised his workshop and trained his pupils. In the lower part of the *St. Catherine* picture Bonastri included a male figure with black hair blowing on a fire. The affinities between this figure and Domenicos' *Boy Lighting a Candle* are too conspicuous to be ignored, and strongly indicate that Bonastri had seen a version of the *Boy* while in the Cretan's studio⁶⁵. Willumsen argued that it was not possible for Lattanzio to have kept all the details of his master's *Boy* in his mind, and concluded that he must have had either a drawing or a replica of the picture with him⁶⁶. Although this seems a far-fetched hypothesis, the fact that Bonastri was familiar with Domenicos' *Boy* demonstrates that Domenicos must have given his pupils' access to his works as part of their training. If so, his assistants may have had practice copying the master's works and were probably encouraged to experiment with the reflection of light on figures. This was a common studio practice, one often followed in the sixteenth century, as depicted, for example, in the well-known engravings by Agostino Veneziano (1531) and Enea Vico (1550), which depict pupils

Riccio. According to Mancini, Neroni appreciated Bonastri as a painter and as a man and he offered to give him one of his daughters as a wife; *ibid*, vol. I, p. 230.

⁶³ P.D. Toncelli, *La Casa di Santa Caterina a Siena*, Rome, 1909, p. 80; P. Bacci, 'L'elenco delle pitture, sculture e architetture di Siena, compilato nel 1625-26 da Mons. Fabio Chigi poi Alessandro VII', *Bollettino senese di storia patria*, x, 1939, pp. 324-325; Waterhouse, 'El Greco's Italian Period', p. 65; K.G. Saur, 'Bonastri Lattanzio', in *Allgemeines Künstler Lexikon*, Munich-Leipzig, 1996, vol. XII, pp. 472-473.

⁶⁴ For example, in 1568, Orazio Samacchini received about 200 lire for a *Crucifixion* in S. Maria dei Servi in Bologna, and in 1583, Bartolomeo Passerotti received 240 lire for his *Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple* (3,90×1,98cm) for the Gabella Grossa Chapel, also in Bologna; R. Morselli, 'Bologna', in *Painting for Profit*, p. 149.

⁶⁵ Wethey, *El Greco and His School*, vol. II, pp. 114-115; vol. I, p. 8. Wethey dated Bonastri's *St. Catherine with the Thieves* in 1589, and referred to the figure that was blowing a fire at the lower part of the painting as a direct tribute to Domenicos.

⁶⁶ Willumsen, *La jeunesse du peintre El Greco*, vol. I, pp. 465-466.

of Bandinelli at work in his studio, studying from clay or wax models under artificial light.

Other qualities evident in Bonastri's work for the Sanctuary of St. Catherine provide further clues as to the grounding he received under El Greco, including a good knowledge of foreshortening and perspective, a certain sensitivity to light and colour, and the ability to work in a variety of media. When Bonastri returned to Rome, probably after completing the paintings for the Oratory of S. Caterina⁶⁷, he began working for Cardinal Marco Sittico Altemps (1533-1595)⁶⁸, Pius IV's nephew, at his palace near Piazza Navona. This was the most prestigious commission Bonastri ever received – and it cost him his life, as it was here that he would fall to his death from the scaffolding⁶⁹. Probably the most skilful passage in his work at Palazzo Altemps can be found in the frieze of the Sala delle Prospettive, which is decorated with an illusionistic *loggia*, where a landscape can be seen in perspective through a series of pillars. Bonastri also depicted a group of *putti* (fig. 45) in daring foreshortening behind a balustrade. If these skills, along with a command of the fresco technique, were acquired in Domenicos' workshop, this would suggest that the Cretan was involved in commissions that entailed multi-figured scenes, possibly even here at Palazzo Altemps. Indeed, some historians date these frescoes to 1573⁷⁰, when Bonastri would have been working with the Cretan, which raises the possibility that

⁶⁷ Mancini mentioned that Bonastri returned to Lucignano to paint some pictures, Mancini, *Considerazioni sulla pittura*, vol. I, p. 230: "Dopo haver condotta questa opera se ne ritornò a Lucignano dove operò alcune cose...", which had not been identified until today. F. Brogi wrote in 1897 that he saw a *Holy Family with St. John the Baptist and a Donor* by Bonastri in the rooms of the General of the Benedictine order at Monteoliveto Maggiore, near Asciano, *DBI*, vol. XI, p. 594; Wethey wrote about this picture that it "reflects the style of the Siense painter Domenico Beccafumi", Wethey, *El Greco and His School*, vol. I, p. 81, note 38; vol. II, pp.114-115; the same painting is mentioned in Brogi's book, *Inventario generale degli oggetti d'arte della provincia di Siena*, Siena, 1897. In the above-mentioned entry of *DBI* (vol. XI, p. 594) it is also written that Brogi traced Bonastri's influence on three more paintings in the area of Siena, namely on *St. Christopher with Elisabeth* in the church of S. Cristoforo in Vagliagli, on *St. Jerome* in the church of S. Bernardo in Montepulciano and on bozzetti with the mysteries of Rosary for the confraternity of Corpus Domini in Rapolano; for the latter, see also *Arte in Valdichiana dal XIII al XVIII secolo*, ed. L. Bellosi, G. Cantelli & M. Lenzini Moriondo, Cortona, 1970, p. 52, figs. 79, 80; Willumsen, *La jeunesse du peintre El Greco*, vol. I, pp. 452-453, 455-460, where it is stated that only the picture of Monteoliveto is by Bonastri and that there is one more painting by his hand, a *Baptism of Christ* in the church of S. Francesco in Lucignano, in which we can trace the influence of Sodoma and Beccafumi.

⁶⁸ Marcus Sitticus von Hohenems, who italianised his name to Altemps, took up residence in Rome in 1559 and became a cardinal in 1561; evidence of his magnificence was his palace near Piazza Navona, obtained in 1568, his chapel in S. Maria in Trastevere, painted by Pasquale Cati, and his villa in Frascati; J. Hess, 'On Some Celestial Maps and Globes of the Sixteenth Century', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 30, 1967, p. 407.

⁶⁹ Mancini *Considerazioni sulla pittura*, vol. I, p. 230.

⁷⁰ Scoppola & Vordemann, *Palazzo Altemps*, p. 49, where it is written that Bonastri was killed in the Sala delle Prospettive in 1573; Saur, vol. XII, pp. 472-473.

the commission was originally given to the Cretan. While the plausibility of this theory is undermined by Mancini, who insists that Bonastrì's work for Cardinal Altemps was executed after the *St. Catherine with the Thieves*, the fact remains that Bonastrì was perfectly capable of working on complicated scenes. What is more, Domenicos himself executed large, multi-figured pictures shortly after arriving in Spain (such as the *Disrobing of Christ*, c.1577-1579, Toledo Cathedral), suggesting that he also had prior experience in this area.

El Greco's small-scale Roman works

If Bonastrì did copy his master's *Boy Lighting a Candle*, it follows that Domenicos must have kept *ricordi* or replicas in his studio of the works he had already painted. One such *ricordo* was probably used to produce the version of the *Boy Lighting a Candle* in the Virginia Kraft Payson collection in Florida (61×50.8 cm), which is almost identical in size to the original painted for Cardinal Alessandro Farnese (Museo di Capodimonte, Naples)⁷¹. This painting stands out for its quality and high finish, suggesting that it could be an autograph replica⁷². Perhaps El Greco preserved a quick record of the canvas that he gave to Cardinal Farnese, so that he was able to make a replica of it for future clients. An idea of the size and type of the *ricordi* Domenicos may have used can be gleaned by examining the small *Allegory of the Holy League* in the National Gallery of London (57.8×34.2 cm)⁷³, where the details are rendered less minutely than those included in the prototype. Further evidence that El Greco regularly produce small versions of his works comes from Francisco Pacheco's treatise, which was published posthumously in 1649. In the third book of his treatise, Pacheco described how, when he visited El Greco in 1611, he

⁷¹ *I Farnese: Arte e Collezionismo*, p. 246; N. Hadjinicolaou, 'Boy lighting a Candle', in *El Greco in Italy and Italian Art*, pp. 530-533, esp. p. 533: "...this ambitious painting [of the Payson collection] might have been painted a little before the Naples picture, which executed for the owner of the palace, Cardinal Alessandro Farnese".

⁷² The Payson painting is signed in Greek capital letters over the right shoulder of the figure: "DOMENIKOS THEO...".

⁷³ For the *Allegory of the Holy League* in the National Gallery of London see for example D. Davies, 'Adoración del Nombre de Jesús', in *Felipe II: Un monarca y su época- un príncipe del Rinacimiento*, exh. cat., ed. F. Checa Chermades, Madrid, 1998, pp. 503-506; *El Greco*, [New York/London, 2004], p. 128, where it has been argued that "...the combination of iconographic and technical evidence suggests that the painting [*The Adoration of the Name of Jesus*, in the National Gallery] is a repetition rather than a modello. ...The presence in the National Gallery picture of a carefully executed black border and a painted reverse apparently emulating a wood-grain effect, are additional elements that argue against the proposed preparatory nature of this work".

saw small pictures in oil of works that the painter had executed during his lifetime⁷⁴. If he did keep coloured sketches of his finished compositions throughout his career, as Pacheco claimed, then the path to understanding Domenicos' creative processes leads us once again back to Italy. And it seems that the *ricordi* kept in the master's workshop in Rome served not only a record-keeping function, but were used as models and teaching aids and were copied by both himself and his pupils. Evidently, the Cretan endeavoured to broaden his artistic repertoire constantly in order to meet the demands of the local market, and to respond effectively to contemporary preoccupations about the form and function of images. In this respect, he was far more traditional than he is normally thought to be.

In addition to these *ricordi*, El Greco appears to have kept oil sketches and *modelli* in his studio. Like *ricordi*, this working method was common in Venice, where it was normal in local family workshops, such as those of Titian, Bassano and Veronese⁷⁵, to produce preparatory works, including drawings, *modelli*, and *abbozzi*. A number of small paintings by Domenicos, which will be discussed in the following pages, seem to support my theory that he followed this practice in Rome. These small compositions probably served two main purposes: they were a useful way of finding solutions to compositional problems, and they could be used to show prospective patrons what a complete painting would look like. This would explain why they tended to be such highly finished pictures. Among the works of this kind that were almost certainly produced in Rome are a series of paintings listed in the D'Este inventories, which I will discuss in the following chapter. But there is a further small-scale *St. Francis Receiving the Stigmata*, now in the Accademia Carrara di Belle Arti (Bergamo) (fig. 46), which I think also fits this category. It has been argued that this painting was based on a woodcut by Niccolò Boldrini, after a work by Titian, and should therefore be dated to around 1567-1570⁷⁶. It is my contention, however, that the picture was actually a study after an altarpiece by Piero d'Argenta, now destroyed, in the Spanish church of S. Pietro in Montorio in Rome. The theory that the Bergamo picture was executed in Rome is largely based on the figure of St. Francis, who bears

⁷⁴ F. Pacheco, *Arte de la pintura su antigüedad y grandezas*, Seville, 1649, Book III, p. 337: "Dominico Greco me mostro el año 1611 una alhazena de modelos de barro de su mano...lo que excede toda admiracion los originales de todo quanto avia pintando en su vida, pintados a olio en liencos mas pequeños...".

⁷⁵ Gisolfi, 'Collaboration and Replicas in the Shop of Paolo Veronese and His Heirs', pp. 73-75.

⁷⁶ Hadjinicolaou, 'Saint Francis receiving the Stigmata', in *El Greco: Identity and Transformation*, pp. 357-358, no 8.

a striking resemblance to a figure in a sketch by Padre Sebastiano Resta (1653-1714) after Piero d'Argenta's *Stigmatisation of St. Francis*⁷⁷ (British Library, London) (fig. 47). D'Argenta's altarpiece, which was situated in the first chapel on the left in S. Pietro in Montorio, was later removed to make way for Giovanni de' Vecchi's fresco of the same subject around 1594⁷⁸. In the second edition of his *Vite*, Vasari wrote that Michelangelo had provided the cartoon for the original altarpiece, but that 'the painting was actually carried out by a barber-painter of Cardinal Riario'⁷⁹. The altarpiece was also mentioned by the Spanish painter Pablo de Céspedes, who had clearly seen it, because in his treatise *Discurso de la comparación de la antigua y moderna pintura y escultura* (1604) he expressed doubts as to whether it was painted by Michelangelo himself or by his pupil, Piero d'Argenta⁸⁰. Fortunately, Padre Resta, the ambitious Milanese collector of artists' drawings, made a little drawing after the picture from memory. According to Resta, D'Argenta's picture was painted on wood ('tavola') and was kept in the first sacristy ('sagrestia prima') of the church, and then in the second sacristy, where Resta eventually saw it⁸¹.

Like Céspedes, the Cretan would have seen D'Argenta's altarpiece *in situ* during his stay in Rome. Clearly, impressed by the 'contrapposto' of the figure of St. Francis, with his arms outstretched - something which we can clearly detect in Resta's sketch - Domenicos decided to copy it. The dynamism of the saint in the Bergamo picture contrasts vividly with El Greco's representation of St. Francis in the other two versions of the subject, one now in Naples (c. 1572) (fig. 48), and the other in a private collection⁸². Nor did Domenicos confine his borrowings from the altarpiece in S. Pietro in Montorio to the figure of the saint; he also included the rock walls to either side of St. Francis. The most striking similarity, however, between the Bergamo picture and Resta's sketch is the horizontal format, which departs from the vertical shape of the *St. Francis* in Naples. Together with the arrangement of the composition, the brisk, coarse brushstrokes strongly suggest that the Bergamo picture was a study

⁷⁷ G. Agosti & M. Hirst, 'Michelangelo, Piero d'Argenta and the 'Stigmatisation of St. Francis'', *The Burlington Magazine*, 138, 1996, p. 684, fig. 63.

⁷⁸ R. Roli, 'Giovanni de' Vecchi (II)', *Arte antica e moderna*, 29, 1965, pp. 328, 331-332, notes 59, 60; A. Pinelli, 'Pittura e controriforma. 'Convenienza' e misticismo in Giovanni de' Vecchi: Note e schede', *Ricerche di storia dell'arte*, 6, 1977, pp. 59-60.

⁷⁹ Vasari, *Vite*, vol. VII, p. 149; Agosti & Hirst, 'Michelangelo, Piero d'Argenta and the 'Stigmatisation of St. Francis'', p. 684.

⁸⁰ Agosti & Hirst, 'Michelangelo, Piero d'Argenta and the 'Stigmatisation of St. Francis'', p. 683.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 684.

⁸² Hadjinicolaou, 'Saint Francis receiving the Stigmata', in *El Greco: Identity and Transformation*, pp. 358-359, no 9; *El Greco*, [New York/London, 2004], p. 102, no 11.

after Piero d'Argenta's *St. Francis*, and that it probably served as a *modello* that was kept in the painter's studio for studying and copying. The fact that the painter chose a more active posture for St. Francis, while retaining the pose of brother Leo already used in the Naples picture, leads us to conclude that the Bergamo picture was executed after the Naples picture⁸³, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

As Michelangelo's influence never really left Domenicos, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the Bergamo picture obliquely alludes to the importance of Michelangelo's art for Domenicos, as Piero d'Argenta was an associate of Buonarroti during the master's first stay in Rome (1496-1501). A number of other works by the Cretan painter during his Italian sojourn show the same preoccupation with Michelangelo, including the two *Pietàs* in The Johnson collection (The Philadelphia Museum of Art) and in The Hispanic Society of America (New York), Michelangelo's portrait in the Minneapolis *Purification of the Temple*⁸⁴, and the *St. Sebastian* in Palencia (fig. 59). As Paul Joannides has rightly observed, it is likely that the *St. Sebastian*, whose monumentality and plasticity owe much to Michelangelo, 'was painted in Italy as proof of a *virtù* adequate to a major commission and, when that failed to transpire, carried to Spain as a demonstration-piece'⁸⁵. Domenicos' close relations with Fulvio Orsini, who was the proud owner of twenty works by Michelangelo⁸⁶, would undoubtedly have given him access to the collections of Pierantonio Bandini⁸⁷ and Tommaso de' Cavalieri (c.1509-1587), where certain paper works by Michelangelo may also have been available to the Cretan.

⁸³ For the opposite view, see Hadjinicolaou in *El Greco in Italy and Italian Art*, p. 525: "...the Bergamo painting is earlier than the Naples one...Such an assessment may also derive at stylistic grounds, since the style of the Bergamo painting is harder and the brush strokes are even coarser".

⁸⁴ Marcello Venusti after Michelangelo's *Purification of the Temple* in the National Gallery of London has often been cited as a source of inspiration for Domenicos' *Purification*; see for example, *El Greco*, [New York/London, 2004], p. 88.

⁸⁵ Joannides, 'El Greco and Michelangelo', in *El Greco of Crete: Proceedings of the International Symposium*, Iraklion, 1-5 September 1990, p. 207; also Joannides commenting on Wethey's suggestion that "Sebastian seemed to reveal knowledge of Michelangelo's Victory as well as of figures in the Last Judgement.. [and] of Adam in the Creation" argued – rightly, in my opinion – that "such an amalgam indicates something beyond mere influence – an attempt to take possession of three phases of Michelangelo's style and two of his media. If a dating of the *St. Sebastian* to c.1575 is correct, this painting would represent the peak of Greco's Michelangelism, from which the elements of the Santo Domingo commission mark an increasingly steep descent" (*ibid*, p. 209).

⁸⁶ De Nolhac, 'Les collections de Fulvio Orsini', pp. 431-436, nos 14, 58-60, 62-76, 98; an example of the great value that Michelangelo's drawings had in Rome at the time is no 59, a fragment for the fresco of the Pauline chapel, which was described as framed ('corniciato di noce'); C. Bambach Cappel, 'Michelangelo's Cartoon for the *Crucifixion of St. Peter* Reconsidered', *Master Drawings*, 25, 1987, pp. 131-142.

⁸⁷ For the Bandini family see ch. 6, note 105.

In addition to keeping *ricordi* and *modelli*, Domenicos may also have kept a portfolio of drawings from the paintings and sculptures, ancient and modern, he had seen in Rome. In all probability, his assistants would have had access to such drawings, which formed an important part of the painter's capital, and most likely would have taken them with him when he moved to Spain. Among these drawings there must have been one of the *Laocoön*, which appears to have been exploited for the head of a spectator in the Parma *Healing of the Blind*, and later in the eponymous *Laocoön*, painted in Spain around 1610-1614 (Samuel H. Kress Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington). Like his friend Federico Zuccaro, who believed that artistic excellence was based on the careful study of ancient models, Domenicos also used drawings and engravings after antique monuments. As discussed in a previous chapter, he used a drawing by Giovanni Antonio Dosio published by Gamucci (Venice, 1565) for the depiction of the Baths of Diocletian in the Parma *Healing of the Blind*, and he probably practised with the architectural setting on paper before painting with oils on canvas. In the 1621 inventory of his possessions, Jorge Manuel listed two books that apparently belonged to his father, the 'antiguedades de roma' and the 'prospetibas y anteguedades de roma'⁸⁸. Although we cannot be certain if these were sets of drawings or engravings⁸⁹, it seems safe to assume that they represented antiquities of Rome, and would have been used by Domenicos, and presumably by his assistants. Indeed, Mancini recounted that it was Bonastri's association with El Greco, and the opportunity to refine his skills under the Cretan master, that led to the important commission for the confraternity of St. Catherine⁹⁰. Bonastri's transformation under Domenicos' tutelage is of critical importance for our understanding first of the master-apprentice relationship, and secondly of the Greek master's working methods during this time.

Given the number of quotations in his pictures, El Greco must also have kept copies of works by other artists, and have produced drawings based on their work, as we saw with his version of Michelangelo's *Day*. Drawing on paper certainly helped Domenicos to explore compositional ideas, experiment with different artistic influences, and work out practical problems, such as the details of figures and the

⁸⁸ Borja de San Roman y Fernández, 'De la vida del Greco', p. 89, nos 14, 17, in *El Greco: Documents on His Life and Work*, p. 382.

⁸⁹ Bury, 'El Greco's Books', p. 391.

⁹⁰ Mancini, *Considerazioni sulla pittura*, vol. I, p. 230, [f. 65]: "...sotto la disciplina di quel Greco che operò con la maniera di Titiano e poi morte in Spagna fece tal progresso che fu chiamato a Siena ad operar per la Confraternita di S. Caterina in Fonte Branda".

organisation of the picture space when several figures were involved. Drawing would also have allowed him to enlarge his personal pictorial vocabulary, stimulate his creative imagination and communicate his sophisticated ideas to prospective clients. Indeed, we know from his annotations on Vitruvius that he considered drawing of prime importance in the training of an artist⁹¹. It is striking, however, that very few drawings by Domenicos have come to light and most of those that we do have are attributed to the master's Spanish period⁹². And yet one hundred and fifty drawings were listed in the inventory of his possessions after his death in 1614⁹³. While some of them were probably studies for compositions and individual figures made in Spain, some of them must have been executed while he was still in Rome. It would not be surprising, therefore, if more drawings by his hand from this period come to light in the future.

Like most artists of his day, Domenicos also made extensive use of woodcuts and engravings during his career. They provided a low-cost method of easily reproducing and disseminating images. As many of his figures derived from print sources, he also seems to have kept and used engravings as an aid to developing his compositions, shaping his ideas and solving compositional problems. In at least one case, namely the *View of Mount Sinai*, we know that Domenicos used engravings of landscapes and maps, and it is likely that he owned architectural prints. In other cases, Domenicos appears to have relied on engravings for information about pictures⁹⁴, especially when he cannot have known the original works. Judging from the great number of prints (200) listed in the painter's studio at the time of his death⁹⁵, we can conjecture that prints were also present in his studio in Rome. They must certainly have played a role in the teaching of his pupil-assistants, as they had visual information that could be discussed and copied, even though it is difficult to say which woodcuts and engravings Domenicos owned at that time. It would be

⁹¹ Mariás & Bustamante, 'Le Greco et sa théorie de l'architecture', p. 37 in *El Greco: Works in Spain*, p. 363.

⁹² For a different approach, see N. Turner, 'A Proposal for El Greco as a Draftsman', *Master Drawings*, 45, 2007, pp. 291-324.

⁹³ De Borja de San Román y Fernández, *El Greco en Toledo*, p. 195, in *El Greco: Documents on His Life and Work*, p. 273.

⁹⁴ M. Constantoudaki-Kitromilides, 'Italian Influences in El Greco's Early Work: Some new Observations', in *El Greco of Crete: Proceedings of the International Symposium*, pp. 97-118; I. Goniotakis, 'A Source for El Greco's 'Allegory of the Holy League'', in *El Greco in Italy & Italian Art: Proceedings of the International Symposium*, pp. 177-184.

⁹⁵ De Borja de San Román y Fernández, *El Greco en Toledo*, p. 195, in *El Greco: Documents on His Life and Work*, p. 273.

reasonable to suppose, however, that if a motif taken from a print appears in the painter's works over a number of years, as is the case with the sea monster from Dürer's *Last Judgment* woodcut (*Kleine Passion*), then this print must have been in his possession and must consequently have become part of his studio furnishings. When considering how Domenicos' studio was set up, a final question to ponder is whether or not one could buy ready-made pictures from the painter. It is a possibility that we cannot exclude, as there was certainly a market for such works⁹⁶. We know, for example, that back in Crete, on December 26 1566, Domenicos had sold a picture with a gold background depicting the Passion of Christ by the system of lots⁹⁷. Yet subjection to market conditions required that the painter would have to work at speed and, as discussed, Domenicos appeared to be critical of this artistic practice.

The employment of two assistants-pupils by the Cretan and the possible existence of drawings, engravings, *ricordi* and *modelli* in his workshop in Rome, as the above specific examples indicate, show that in time the painter sought to improve the scope and size of his business, to work on more ambitious commissions and to negotiate better financial arrangements for him and his assistants, as patrons would occasionally pay their wages as well. As Domenicos had a well-staffed workshop in Toledo, where he succeeded in satisfying both a sophisticated clientele with large-scale commissions and the local demand for devotional pictures of favourite saints, such as St. Francis⁹⁸, it is safe to assume that he must have learnt how to operate a corporate studio, negotiate prices, and get engaged in business while in Rome.

⁹⁶ Spear, 'Rome: Setting the Stage', in *Painting for Profit*, p. 42, where an agent of the Gonzaga family to Rome in 1603 is reported to have been searching for pictures in shops.

⁹⁷ Panagiotakes, *El Greco- The Cretan Years*, p. 29.

⁹⁸ R.L. Kagan, 'The Artist's Clientele: El Greco as Businessman', in *El Greco's Studio: Proceedings of the International Symposium*, Rethymnon, Crete, 23-25 September, 2005, pp. 41-49.

Chapter 8 – Patrons and Paintings: Domenicos’ Work After 1572

The search for new patrons and commissions after 1572 would not have been easy. Karel van Mander, who was in the city around 1575, recounted that ‘in Rome the commissions for public places were executed for a crust of bread, while the young painters were attempting to establish their reputation by painting altarpieces’¹. The election of Ugo Boncompagni in 1572 (Pope Gregory XIII), who followed the tradition of newly elected pontiffs by employing artists from his native city, failed to increase the opportunities for Domenicos, who clearly did not belong in the pope’s artistic circle. Domenicos’ rival, Vasari, on the other hand, who was called to continue the decoration of the Sala Regia, was now surrounded by a group of Bolognese artists. Lorenzo Sabatini arrived from Bologna together with Denis Calvaert, followed by Baldassare Croce and the Bolognese architect Ottaviano Mascherino, who arrived in Rome in 1574². The reactions of artists already resident in Rome to the pro-Bolognese patronage of Gregory XIII were mixed; some, including Federico Zuccaro, Marco Pino and Livio Agresti, left Rome³, while others stayed and worked for foreign patrons. Girolamo Muziano, for instance, spent this first phase of Boncompagni’s pontificate working on paintings to be sent to other Italian cities⁴. Domenicos appears to have followed a similar path, working for private patrons, largely outside Rome.

In his *Considerazioni sulla pittura*, Mancini reports that El Greco ‘gave great satisfaction’ to some private clients, and singles out a work in the possession of the ‘lawyer Lancillotti’, (‘avvocato Lancillotti’), without, however, referring to either the type of picture, or to the lawyer’s first name⁵. This has fuelled a good deal of

¹ Van Mander, *Le vite degli illustri pittori fiamminghi, olandesi e tedeschi*, p. 297, fol. 271v: “...a Roma i lavori destinati ai luoghi pubblici venivano eseguiti in cambio di una crosta di pane, mentre i giovani pittori cercavano di farsi un nome attraverso l’esecuzione delle pale d’altare”.

² Brown, ‘El Greco and Toledo’, in *El Greco of Toledo*, pp. 90-91; J. Marciari, ‘Raffaellino da Reggio in the Vatican’, *The Burlington Magazine*, 148, 2006, pp. 187-191; Raffaellino da Reggio was exceptionally given steady work at the Vatican until his death in 1578 (*ibid.*, p. 187).

³ Acidini Luchinat seems to agree with this view, arguing that the decrease in the number of commissions Federico Zuccaro received played an important role in his decision to leave Rome in June 1573; Acidini Luchinat, *Taddeo e Federico Zuccari*, vol. II, p. 53.

⁴ Marciari, ‘Raffaellino da Reggio in the Vatican’, p. 189.

⁵ Mancini, *Considerazioni sulla pittura*, vol. I, pp. 230-231: “Questo, havendo studiato in Venetia et in particolare le cose di Titiano, era venuto a gran segno nella professione e quel modo di operare; onde, venutosene a Roma et in tempo che non v’eran molti huomini e quelli di maniera non cosi risoluta ne cosi fresca come pareva la sua, pigliò grand’ ardore, tanto più che in alcune cose private diede gran sodisfattione, delle quali se ne vede hoggi una appresso all’ avvocato Lancillotti, quale da alcuni vien stimata di Titiano”.

speculation as to the owner's identity. The most likely candidates are either Scipione Lancellotti (1527-1598) or his nephew Orazio Lancellotti (1571-1620)⁶, since they both started their careers as 'auditors' of the Sacra Rota in 1565 and 1589 respectively⁷, and they both were cardinals (1583 and 1611 respectively) by the time that Mancini was writing his treatise. It is significant to note at this point that no other member of the Lancellotti family seems to have been connected with the ecclesiastical legal system, since Orazio's father, Paolo, had been conservator at the Capitol, while Orazio's younger brothers, Giovanni Battista (1575-1656), Tiberio (1577-1629) and Ottavio (1578-1614), were respectively Bishop of Nola, a conservator, and a soldier⁸.

However, the use of the word 'lawyer' ('avvocato') instead of the word 'cardinal' ('cardinale') to identify Scipione or Orazio, has led to the suggestion that there was another lawyer with the same name from Perugia⁹, a hypothesis that has caused much confusion in an already complex matter. It is important to remember at this juncture that, while Mancini began writing the second part of his *Considerazioni* around 1617¹⁰, before his appointment as a doctor at the Papal Court of Urban VIII, he probably based his account of Domenicos' life on information given to him before 1611. This would have come either from his compatriot Lattanzio Bonastri¹¹, or from a member of the Orsini-Lancellotti circle¹², or most probably from both. As the

⁶ Orazio Lancellotti was the son of Paolo Lancellotti and Giulia Delfini, whose family had a close connection with Fulvio Orsini; P. Cavazzini, 'Il Palazzo e la famiglia Lancellotti nel primo Seicento', in *Collezione di Antichità di Palazzo Lancellotti ai Coronari*, ed. R. Marcucci, Rome, 2008, pp. 28-29. It is interesting to note that Scipione Lancellotti started building the family palace at Via dei Coronari, as a sign of his family's elevated status after having received the red hat; S.C. Leone, 'Cardinal Pamphilj Builds a Palace: Self-Representation and Familial Ambition in Seventeenth-Century Rome', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 63, 2004, p. 448.

⁷ P. Cavazzini, *Palazzo Lancellotti ai Coronari: Cantiere di Agostino Tassi*, Rome, 1998, p. 9.

⁸ Cavazzini, 'Il Palazzo e la famiglia Lancellotti nel primo Seicento', p. 28; Cavazzini, *Palazzo Lancellotti ai Coronari*, pp. 10-11.

⁹ *El Greco*, [New York/London, 2004], p. 99: "However, Mancini would hardly have referred to this man [Orazio], who was made a cardinal in 1611, as a lawyer. Patrizia Cavazzini kindly informs me [Keith Christiansen] that there was a Lancellotti family of lawyers from Perugia, one of whose members was named Orazio. As though to make matters more complicated, both Orazios studied law at Perugia, so that at more or less the same time there was a famous Perugian lawyer and university professor and a future Roman cardinal with the same name". Perugia's faculty of jurists was quite famous as well as the jurist Gianpaolo Lancellotti (c.1510-1591), who had been engaged by Paul IV to draw up an institute of canon law following in the footsteps of Justinian in his institutes of civil law. Coincidentally, his son was named Orazio Lancellotti; G.B. Vermiglioli, *Biografia degli scrittori Perugini e notizie delle opere loro*, Perugia, 1829, vol. II, pp. 40-48.

¹⁰ For the different stages of Mancini's treatise, Mancini, *Considerazioni sulla pittura*, vol. II, p. ix.

¹¹ Longhi, 'Il soggiorno romano del Greco', p. 302

¹² Sometimes, Mancini mentioned some of his sources, such as, for example, the Bolognese Ottaviano Mascherino (vol. I, p. 222, in the Life of Matteo da Lecce) and Cardinal Pietro Campori, (vol. I, p. 203, in the Life of Giuseppe Porta), who were both in contact with the Lancellotti family. Mascherino was

Sieneſe doctor was not in the habit of reuiſing or amending his material¹³, it is highly likely that he ſimply failed to correct the title of the Lancellotti from ‘lawyer’ to ‘cardinal’, juſt as he never added Domenicos’ real name in his biography. In any event, whether it was Scipione or Orazio Lancellotti, this figure ſhould not be conſidered as a formal patron of Domenicos after 1572; inſtead it makes much more ſenſe for the picture in queſtion to haue paſſed to the Lancellotti family from Fulvio Orſini, poſſibly before the ſcholar’s death in 1600. Fulvio, who prized Orazio as a dear friend (‘chariſſimo’), named him executor of his will and bequeathed him books, manuſcripts and two muſical inſtruments decorated by Annibale Carracci¹⁴. The poſſibility that he alſo gifted a painting by Domenicos ſuggeſts that Fulvio may haue poſſeſſed an even larger number of paintings by the Cretan than thoſe liſted in his inventory, which would ſurely confirm that the relationship between the Greek maſter and the Roman ſcholar was particularly cloſe, and continued beyond the brief ſpell that Domenicos ſpent in the Farnese houſehold.

If this is true, Fulvio could well haue acted as a go-between in bringing Domenicos into contact with a network of potential patrons beyond Rome. Evidence for this hypotheſis is ſupplied by a curious reference in the inventory of the D’ Eſte family of 1592, which has eſcaped notice until now. In the inventory of Lucrezia D’ Eſte (d.1598), the daughter of the Duke of Ferrara, Alfonſo II (1533-1597), there is a record of a picture by Domenicos representing a *Circumciſion of Chriſt*: ‘uno [quadro] della Circoncione di mano del Greco’¹⁵. Although no extant painting by Domenicos can be identified with this picture, it is poſſible to conjecture how it came into the D’ Eſte collection. Aleſſandro de’ Grandi, who acted as agent to the Duke of

the architect of the church of S. Salvatore in Lauro, whoſe cardinal-protector was Scipione Lancellotti, and Cardinal Campori received the red hat under Paul V (Camillo Borghese, 1605-1621), as Orazio did. Thus, we cannot exclude the poſſibility that either Maſcherino or Campori gave Mancini ſome information about Orazio Lancellotti.

¹³ Mahon, ‘Notes on the Manuſcripts of Mancini’s *Trattato*’, in *Studies in Seicento Art and Theory*, p. 328: “He is quite unmethodical when making additions to his work...He does not appear to haue read through his text ſystematically with a view to reconciling it with his written ſources and eliminating the inconſiſtencies within his own work”; Hess, ‘Note Manciniane’, p. 107: “peggio ancora, il Mancini non ſempre aueua la pazienza di correggere il manuſcritto che gli veniva conſegnato, o di riempire i molti luoghi laſciati in bianco, non inſerendovi i nomi propri che non aueua preſenti al momento della dettatura”; L. Salerno, ‘Sul trattato di Giulio Mancini’, *Commentari*, ii, 1951, pp. 26-39, where Mancini is deſcribed as ‘an amateur and a dilettante’ (‘un amatore, un dilettante’).

¹⁴ Orazio, who was Properzia Delfini’s nephew, was named executor of Fulvio’s will together with Flaminio Delfini; De Nolhac, *La Bibliothèque de Fulvio Orsini*, pp. 25-26; Cavazzini, ‘Il Palazzo e la famiglia Lancellotti nel primo Seicento’, p. 28.

¹⁵ P. Della Pergola, ‘L’ inventario del 1592 di Lucrezia d’ Eſte’, *Arte antica e moderna*, 7, 1959, p. 349, no 19.

Ferrara, came to Rome in 1570 with instructions to purchase antiquities for the Duke, as well as eighteen busts for the decoration of the ducal library¹⁶. According to a letter that Fulvio Orsini wrote to Cardinal Farnese on September 11 1571, De' Grandi had asked his advice about the purchase of some ancient busts¹⁷. He added that 'the duke of Ferrara, after the design of Pirro, is putting together his library of manuscripts, consisting of books by Manutius, Stadius, and others; and above the pilasters which separate the bookcases he puts the ancient heads of philosophers and literary men'¹⁸. The Duke was also keen to collect works of art¹⁹ as well as coins and medallions from already dispersed collections, such as those of the King of Hungary Matthias Corvinus (1443-1490), and the Cardinal Rodolfo Pio da Carpi (1500-1564)²⁰. He was also intent on acquiring books and manuscripts, particularly Greek, from Venice²¹. The efforts of Alfonso II, who was attempting to promote Ferrara as a centre of learning, intensified after the disastrous earthquake of November 16 1570, that had shattered the intellectual and economic life of the city.

Not only was the ducal agent in Rome at the same time as Domenicos²², but he was in close contact with Fulvio, as mentioned above. It is entirely possible, therefore, that the Roman scholar introduced Domenicos to Alessandro de' Grandi, and consequently to Alfonso II D'Este²³, as a learned Greek artist who could respond to

¹⁶ Ligorio aspired to organise the ducal library together with a museum of antiquities on the second floor of the east wing of the D' Este palace; Coffin, *Pirro Ligorio: The Renaissance Artist, Architect, and Antiquarian*, pp. 111-112. By using ancient sculpture to decorate the ducal library, Ligorio was emulating the Romans Gaius Asinius Pollio, Atticus and Marcus Varro (Pliny, *Natural History*, Book XXXV, ii, 10-11, pp. 266-267). It is not a coincidence that Cardinal Farnese, who used to place the collected items in the *stanze dei Quadri*, on the second floor of Palazzo Farnese, ordered twelve marble busts of Roman emperors from Tommaso della Porta in 1562; Riebesell, *Die Sammlung des Kardinal Alessandro Farnese*, pp. 28-30.

¹⁷ Ronchini & Poggi, 'Lettere di Fulvio Orsini ai Farnese', p. 50, letter iii.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 50, letter iii, which also mentions the forthcoming purchase of the bust of Lysias; for the Engl. transl. see Coffin, *Pirro Ligorio: The Renaissance Artist, Architect, and Antiquarian*, p. 112.

¹⁹ For the art collection of the Duke of Ferrara see L. Spezzaferro, 'Perché per molti segni sempre si conoscono le cose...: Per la situazione del lavoro artistico nella Ferrara di Alfonso II', in *L'impresa di Alfonso II: saggi e documenti sulla produzione artistica a Ferrara nel secondo Cinquecento*, ed. J. Bertini & L. Spezzaferro, Bologna, 1987, pp. 3-22; H.E. Wethey, *The Paintings of Titian. III, The Mythological and Historical Paintings*, London, 1975, pp. 29-33; D.R. Coffin, 'Pirro Ligorio and Decoration of the Late Sixteenth Century at Ferrara', *The Art Bulletin*, xxxvii, 1955, pp. 167-185.

²⁰ D. Fava, *La biblioteca Estense nel suo sviluppo storico*, Modena, 1925, pp. 130-157, where the author points out that Alberto Pio da Carpi had created in Rome a remarkable library, which was passed to his nephew Cardinal Rodolfo Pio da Carpi after his death 1531. When Rodolfo died in 1564, his library, even richer than his uncle's, was dispersed and sold to different collectors.

²¹ Coffin, *Pirro Ligorio: The Renaissance Artist, Architect, and Antiquarian*, p. 112.

²² For De' Grandi's letter to the Duke on May 10 1572, Fava, *La biblioteca Estense nel suo sviluppo storico*, p. 154.

²³ The Duke of Ferrara arrived in Rome on January 19, 1573, and went back to Ferrara on March 4 of the same year; Coffin, *Pirro Ligorio: The Renaissance Artist, Architect, and Antiquarian*, p. 117.

the Duke's refined tastes. And if this were the case, perhaps it was this recommendation that led to the commission for the painting later found in Lucrezia D' Este's collection. An annotation written by Domenicos in the margin of his copy of Vasari's *Vite* does suggest that the Cretan held the Duke of Ferrara in great esteem: when Vasari reported that Michelangelo offered 12,000 crowns to Duke Alfonso in order to politely avoid his pressing invitation to stay at his court, Domenicos wrote: 'I don't know if this can be said to a Duke of Ferrara'²⁴. If indeed Alessandro de' Grandi had approached the Cretan, this would not have been the first time that a member of Farnese's entourage had gone on to work for the D' Este. As already noted, not so long before, Pirro Ligorio had accepted the post of ducal antiquarian in Ferrara after the death of Enea Vico in 1567²⁵.

After appearing in Lucrezia's inventory of 1592, Domenicos' *Circumcision of Christ* was subsequently listed in the inventories of the Aldobrandini family of 1603, 1626 and 1682²⁶, a fact that can be explained by the events that took place in Ferrara after Alfonso II's death in 1597. It was then that Lucrezia d' Este formed an alliance with Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini (1571-1621), nephew of the Pope Clement VIII (Ippolito Aldobrandini, 1591-1605) and chief leader of the 25,000 troops that were marching against Ferrara in October 1597²⁷. Before she died, she left two hundred and fifty paintings of the ducal collections to Cardinal Aldobrandini in her will²⁸, including Titian's *Worship of Venus*, the *Andrians*, *Bacchus and Ariadne*, and the *Holy Family with St. Catherine*²⁹. It seems that Domenicos' *Circumcision* was also

²⁴ Mariás, *El Greco y su tiempo*, Greek transl. p. 103; Vasari, *Vite*, vol VII, p. 199; for the translation of the incident see G. Vasari, *Artists of the Renaissance: A Selection from Lives of the Artists*, Engl. transl. G. Bull, London, 1979, p. 268: "then he [the Duke] tried to persuade him to stay in his service in Ferrara, promising to pay him a generous salary. Michelangelo, however, who had other plans, was unwilling to remain; so the duke begged him to stay at least while the war continued and renewed the offer to give him anything in his power. Not wanting to be outdone in courtesy, Michelangelo thanked him warmly and then, turning towards his two companions, said that he had brought twelve thousand crowns to Ferrara and that if the duke needed them they were at his disposal".

²⁵ Mandowsky & Mitchell, *Pirro Ligorio's Roman Antiquities*, p. 5.

²⁶ P. Della Pergola, 'Gli inventari Aldobrandini', *Arte antica e moderna*, 12, 1960, pp. 428, 439, no. 20: "un quadro con la Circoncisione di N.S di mano del Greco del n. 20"; P. Della Pergola, 'Gli inventari Aldobrandini: l'inventario del 1682 (III)', *Arte antica e moderna*, 22, 1963, p. 178: "un quadro bislungo della Circoncisione de Nro Sig.re del Greco in tela alto palmi tre con cornice nera, come a detto inventario a fogli 237 N.410 et a quello del Sig.r Cardinale Ca 101".

²⁷ The Pope, who was intending to annex the Duchy to the Papal States on the pretext that Alfonso II had died without direct heirs after three marriages, entered the city on January 29 1598; C. D'Onofrio, 'Inventario dei dipinti del Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini compilato da G.B. Agucchi nel 1603', *Palatino*, viii, 1964, pp. 15-20.

²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 16.

²⁹ F. Haskell, *Patrons and Painters: A Study in the Relations Between Italian Art and Society in the Age of the Baroque*, New Haven & London, [1st ed. 1963], 1980, pp. 25, 38-39.

among those paintings, possibly with other works by the Cretan, as I shall outline below. The collection would later pass to the Pamphili family, when Cardinal Pietro's heiress, Olimpia Aldobrandini (1623-1681), married Prince Camillo. And while all trace of Domenicos' pictures disappeared after the death of Olimpia Aldobrandini, they probably passed to one of Olimpia's sons, either Giovanni Battista Pamphili (1649-1709), together with the family villa in Frascati, or Cardinal Benedetto Pamphili (1653-1730), who inherited part of the Aldobrandini collection from their palace on the Corso after 1682³⁰.

Curiously, there was a second *Circumcision* by El Greco listed in the 1603 Aldobrandini inventory, which compiled by the Bolognese prelate Giovanni Battista Agucchi (1570-1632), private secretary and *maggiordomo* of Cardinal Aldobrandini³¹. While the first painting was described in the 1682 inventory, drawn up at the time of Olimpia Aldobrandini's death, as 'oblong' ('bislongo'), 'tre palmi' in height, just over 67cm, and painted on canvas ('in tela')³², this second painting was described by Agucchi as small ('una circoncisione piccola')³³. Surely this painting also came originally from the D'Este collection, and was probably a *modello* for the larger one, sent to the Duke either as evidence of the painter's talents, or as an example of how the painter intended to handle the subject, or both.

Another small picture by Domenicos, this time a portrait, can also be found in the inventory of 1603 and again in the 1665 inventory of Donna Olimpia. The portrait ('un ritratto in quadro piccolo di mano del Greco')³⁴, which was 'uno palmo et un quarto' high (about 27cm)³⁵, is described as having its upper part inscribed with Greek letters ('con alcune lettere greche sopra la testa')³⁶. The inclusion of the inscription in Greek supports the hypothesis that this painting also came from the D'

³⁰ B.B. Fredericksen, 'Leonardo and Mantegna in the Buccleuch Collection', *The Burlington Magazine*, 133, 1991, pp. 116-118, esp. p. 117; I have not been able to consult the inventory of 1710.

³¹ D. Mahon, *Studies in Seicento Art and Theory*, London, 1947, p. 112.

³² Della Pergola, 'Gli inventari Aldobrandini: l'inventario del 1682 (III)', p. 178, no 527: "un quadro bislongo della Circoncisione de Nro Sig.re del Greco in tela alto palmi tre con Cornice nera, come a detto Inventario a fogli 237 N.410 et a quello del Sig.r Cardinale Ca101"; D'Onofrio notes that "palmo architettonico romano" was 22,3 cm.

³³ D'Onofrio, 'Inventario dei dipinti del Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini compilato da G.B. Agucchi nel 1603', p. 18, no 20: "Una circoncisione di mano del Greco"; *ibid*, p. 19, no 30: "Una circoncisione piccola di mano del Greco".

³⁴ D'Onofrio, 'Inventario dei dipinti del Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini compilato da G.B. Agucchi nel 1603 (III)', p. 208, no 285.

³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 208, no 285: "un quadro in tavola piccolo alto p[almi] uno et un quarto con un ritratto con cornice dorata di mano del Greco con alcune lettere greche sopra la testa segnato n. 285".

³⁶ D'Onofrio, 'Inventario dei dipinti del Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini compilato da G.B. Agucchi nel 1603 (III)', p. 208, no 285.

Este collection, as the history of the Ferrarese ruling family, published by the ducal secretary G.B. Pigna in 1570³⁷, claimed that the origins of the family dated back to either Hercules, or the Trojans³⁸. This suggests that the sitter may have been a member of the D' Este. A further picture on panel by Domenicos, of similar dimensions, is listed in the inventory of 1682 and represented the *Virgin with two Saints*³⁹. Given its small size ('quadretto') and its support material ('tavola'), we can argue that this panel, together with the above portrait, and the small *Circumcision*, formed part of a group of pictures, which may have functioned as *modelli*. Painting on a solid support, such as wood, could have permitted Domenicos to give greater precision to the details, to render the colours more vividly, and to display his craftsmanship, all of which would no doubt have been intended to impress his prospective patron.

If his first picture, probably the *Circumcision*, was well-received by the Duke, Domenicos may have been asked to submit another work, perhaps the portrait. The large number of pictures by him found in the Aldobrandini inventories indicates either that the Duke of Ferrara approached the painter with a large commission in mind, which may explain why Domenicos hired two pupils-assistants, or that he was simply indecisive about the subject of the painting, and asked Domenicos for several possibilities to choose from. Whatever the precise details of the case, the Cretan appears to have been determined to keep the favour of his demanding client, by sending him a number of new works, which begs the question of how much Domenicos was paid for these small paintings, considering that bigger paintings with more figures usually commanded higher prices⁴⁰. Although there is no documentary evidence to inform us of Domenicos' fees at the time, we can assume that the painter relied, as before, on his reputation, his status as a learned man and on the generosity of his patron, in the hope that the Duke would increase his compensation beyond what he would have asked.

The evidence examined thus far indicates that Domenicos was seeking patronage among significant courtly clients outside Rome. In Rome, however, he

³⁷ Coffin, *Pirro Ligorio: The Renaissance Artist, Architect, and Antiquarian*, p. 127.

³⁸ Coffin, 'Pirro Ligorio and Decoration of the Late Sixteenth Century at Ferrara', pp. 171-172.

³⁹ Della Pergola, 'Gli inventari Aldobrandini: l'inventario del 1682 (III)', p. 188, no 685: "quadretto in tavola del Greco rappresentante la Madonna Nro Sigre e due altri Santi con cornicetta intagliata indorata del N.29 era del N.30 descritto nell' Inv. Del Sig.r Crd.le Ca 636".

⁴⁰ Spear, 'Rome: Setting the Stage', in *Painting for Profit*, p. 53, where some cases are cited regarding the fees of small paintings ('quadretti'), which measured a 'palmo', and ranged from 60 to 100 *scudi*.

appears to have pinned his hopes on more modest private patrons, many of whom wished to enrich their art collections and decorate their ‘studioli’ with portraits. During his stay at Palazzo Farnese, Domenicos had surely consulted the portraits in the collections of Orsini and Farnese, as well as the herms of illustrious men in Orsini’s *Imagines*, where the connection between form and meaning, word and image, physical likeness and virtue was expounded upon. Together with Orsini, the Cretan seems to have taken a particular interest in the portraits of illustrious men, as we have already touched on. It is not a coincidence, therefore, that two of the finest signed pictures that we have by Domenicos from this period were portraits: the *Portrait of a Man* in the Statens Museum for Kunst (Copenhagen) (fig. 49) and the *Portrait of Vincenzo Anastagi* in the Frick Collection (New York)⁴¹ (fig. 50). Portraits, however, even large ones, commanded modest prices when compared with history paintings⁴², and to have significant earnings from portraiture Domenicos had to be very productive.

Originally from Perugia, Vincenzo Anastagi (c.1531-1585) was a knight of St. John of Jerusalem, who bravely fought in the siege of Malta in 1565⁴³. Back in Rome⁴⁴, Anastagi served under Giacomo Boncompagni (1548-1612), the illegitimate son of Pope Gregory XIII⁴⁵, and in 1575 he was appointed sergeant major (‘sergente maggiore’) of Castel Sant’Angelo⁴⁶, an office that had apparently been granted to the old soldier in return for his help and loyalty to the pope. It seems likely that Anastagi

⁴¹ *The Frick Collection: An Illustrated Catalogue*, New York, 1968, vol. II, pp. 303-308.

⁴² Ph. Sohm, ‘Introduction’, in *Painting for Profit*, p. 23; Spear, ‘Rome: Setting the Stage’, in *Painting for Profit*, pp. 92-93, where the author gives the examples of Passignano, who received only 15 *scudi* for two portraits of Clement VIII and Cardinal Aldobrandini in 1603, Ferdinand Vouet, one of the most successful portraitists of the seventeenth century, who received for the bigger portraits 15 to 20 *scudi*, and Giovanni Ferri Senese, who “earned just 10 *scudi* apiece for his portraits of Urban VIII seated in a chair and of Cardinal Barberini, the latter *un retratto grande*”; and Spear concludes that “to gross 1,000 *scudi* annually would have meant selling a 25 *scudi* portrait every nine days”, (*ibid.*, p. 93).

⁴³ Anastagi had become a knight of St. John two years earlier, in 1563; *The Frick Collection: An Illustrated Catalogue*, p. 306.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 306, which mentions that Vincenzo Anastagi was in Perugia in December of 1571. Anastagi probably went to Perugia to attend the requiem mass (11 December 1571) of his compatriot and fellow soldier Ascanio della Corgna, who participated in the Battle of Lepanto (October 1571), but died in Rome on December 3, 1571 from high fever; for the magnificent funeral procession from Rome to Perugia see L. Festuccia, *Castiglione del Lago: Guida al Palazzo Ducale ed alla Fortezza Medievale*, Castiglione del Lago, [1996], 2008, pp. 6-7; also note 55. Yet, Anastagi must have arrived in Rome some time after that date, probably just after the election of the new pope, attempting to establish a point of contact with the new papal court, for in May 1575 was appointed *sergente maggiore* in Castel Sant’Angelo.

⁴⁵ H.E. Wethey, ‘El Greco in Rome and the Portrait of Vincenzo Anastagi’, in *Studies in the History of Art: El Greco, Italy and Spain*, vol. 13, Washington, 1984, p. 175; Dandele, *The Spanish Rome: 1500-1700*, p. 76.

⁴⁶ Marchese di Villarosa, *Notizie di alcuni cavalieri del sacro ordine Gerosolimitano illustri per lettere e per belle arti*, Naples, 1841, p. 16.

commissioned his portrait from Domenicos (fig. 50) to commemorate his new appointment. Thus, the picture can be dated to the second half of 1575 or the beginning of 1576⁴⁷.

Portraits of this type were often found in prestigious households, and were commissioned by notable portraitists, such as Scipione Pulzone da Gaeta (c.1540-1598). A rival of Domenicos in this field, Pulzone had managed to establish a reputation as a portraitist of influential men, such as the Pope Pius V, Cardinal Giovanni Ricci, Marcantonio Colonna, Ferdinando I de' Medici, Grand Duke of Florence, Alessandro Bonelli and Antoine Perrenot de Granvelle⁴⁸. By cultivating a network of personal relations, particularly with the Colonna family, Pulzone was highly successful, and it is not surprising that among Pulzone's important clients was the pope's son, Giacomo Boncompagni⁴⁹, whose portrait he painted in 1574 (Private collection, Washington) (fig. 51). Boncompagni was appointed governor of Castel Sant'Angelo ('castellano') in 1572 and general of the papal armies ('generale della Santa Chiesa') in 1573, for which he was handsomely paid, receiving 1,500 *scudi* a month in time of peace and 3,500 *scudi* in time of war⁵⁰. Pulzone portrayed Boncompagni in armour, holding a letter in his right hand and a cylinder in his left, and looking at the viewer with confidence. His cuirass is richly decorated with allegorical figures and military trophies and trimmed with lace cuffs, while his shining helmet is equally meticulously painted. His elaborate gloves have been carefully arranged on a red velvet-covered table on his right, indicating the man's wealth and status. Pulzone has clearly looked carefully at earlier portrayals of men in armour including Titian's *Alfonso d' Avalos, Marquis of Vasto* (1533, The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles), Agnolo Bronzino's *Portrait of Stefano Colonna* (1546, Galleria nazionale d'arte antica, Rome), and Girolamo Siciolante da Sermoneta's *Portrait of Francesco II Colonna* (1561, Galleria nazionale d'arte antica, Rome)⁵¹. All these portraits are three-quarter length compositions, presenting the sitter in a

⁴⁷ Wethey, 'El Greco in Rome and the Portrait of Vincenzo Anastagi', p. 175.

⁴⁸ S. Schütze, 'Scipione Pulzone, c.1550-1598, Portrait of Jacopo Boncompagni (1574)', in *From Raphael to Carracci: The Art of Papal Rome*, p. 316; F. Zeri, *Pittura e Controriforma: L'arte senza tempo di Scipione da Gaeta*, Vicenza, [Torino, 1957], 1998, pp. 12-15.

⁴⁹ Schütze, 'Scipione Pulzone', in *From Raphael to Carracci: The Art of Papal Rome*, p. 316: "in the same year 1574, he [Pulzone] named his first-born son Giacomo, and Jacopo Boncompagni acted as his godfather".

⁵⁰ Spear, 'Rome: Setting the Stage', in *Painting for Profit*, p. 36.

⁵¹ *From Raphael to Carracci: The Art of Papal Rome*, p. 316, no 97; Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese: *Rivals in Renaissance Venice*, exh. cat., ed. F. Ilchman, Boston, 2009-2010, pp. 210-215.

dignified pose, with a sumptuously decorated outfit, which underlines his military pride and indicates his high rank.

Elements such as the helmet, the gleaming cuirass and the background drapery, blue with a golden trim in Boncompagni's case, have also been repeated in Domenicos' *Portrait of Vincenzo Anastagi*, proving that the Cretan was well aware of the iconography of military portraits, and of Boncompagni's portrait in particular. He was certainly well aware of the fact that Pulzone's commission for the portrait of Boncompagni was closely related to the almost concurrent commission for a portrait of his father, Pope Gregory XIII (c.1575, Villa Sora, Frascati)⁵². Responding to Pulzone's challenge, Domenicos painted a picture with which he probably intended to outdo his rival, and to prove himself to whoever might see his work, including members of the papal family who had ignored him until then. Unlike Pulzone, the Cretan alluded to Anastagi's new public role by emphatically using the format of the full-length portrait, which conformed more to the typology of state portraits. Domenicos also combined the rendering of Anastagi's military identity, presented by his cuirass and helmet, which add to the pictorial splendour, with his force of character.

This raises the question of how Domenicos became involved in the Anastagi commission and why Anastagi picked him to paint his portrait instead of Scipione Pulzone, who had been commissioned by his commander. Being a military man who had spent most of his life in camps, Anastagi probably sought advice from his friends and associates when considering a portraitist. Anastagi was not a scholar, a historian, or a learned antiquarian, so we can imagine that he relied on El Greco to create an elaborate image of him. While the painter combined elements from earlier portraits, he drew Anastagi's face and figure from life (*dal vivo*), investing considerable time and effort over the execution of his picture. One figure who could have acted as a liaison in this context is Fabio Farnese (1547-1579) who, like Anastagi, was a knight of the military Order of Malta (1569). It is possible that Fabio was recruited by Anastagi himself who, after the siege of Malta in 1565, was sent to Italy to gather forces in anticipation of a second assault by the Turks. Crucially, Fabio was a close friend of Fulvio Orsini⁵³, who could once more have proved pivotal in helping

⁵² *Papi in Posa: 500 Years of Papal Portraiture*, exh. cat., ed. F. Petrucci, Washington DC, 2005-2006, p. 80, pl. XIV.

⁵³ Cellini, 'Il contributo di Fulvio Orsini alla ricerca antiquaria', p. 251.

Domenicos to expand his circle of clients. Another possible point of connection between Domenicos and Anastagi is the Della Corgna family from Perugia. Ascanio della Corgna (1516-1571), who took part in the Battle of Lepanto in 1571⁵⁴, had fought with Anastagi at the siege of Malta (1565), while Ascanio's brother, Cardinal Fulvio della Corgna, Bishop of Perugia (1550-1553 & 1564-1574), was in close contact with the Farnese household and with Cardinal Farnese in particular. Alessandro was often viewed among others prelates as a protector of Perugia⁵⁵, and in 1570 Cardinal della Corgna had asked the Perugian architect Galeazzo Alessi (1512-1572) to submit designs for the façade of Farnese's *il Gesù*⁵⁶. It is therefore possible that Domenicos had already come into contact with Cardinal Della Corgna in the Farnese household and that it was Della Corgna who provided the introduction to Anastagi. Politically, the Della Corgna family belonged to the Spanish faction, and Cardinal Fulvio had been put in jail by Paul IV for the support given to his brother Ascanio, who was counted among the Spanish allies⁵⁷. Similarly, Anastagi's position in the papal army involved a certain sympathy for the Spanish, since his commander, Giacomo Boncompagni, was considered their ally⁵⁸. So Domenicos' connections to these circles may well have been instrumental for making the acquaintance of important members of the Spanish community of Rome.

Further evidence of Domenicos' links to members of wealthy Perugian families resident in Rome comes to light from his painting of *St. Francis Receiving the Stigmata* in the Istituto Suor Orsola Benincasa in Naples (fig. 48). This small picture (28.3×20.4cm) bears on its back a handwritten inscription saying that it once belonged to 'His Excellency Monsignor Degli Oddi', and under this is written 'Il Greco'⁵⁹. Although nothing is known about the identity of the patron of the Naples

⁵⁴ C. Black, 'Perugia and Papal Absolutism in Sixteenth Century', *The English Historical Review*, 96, 1981, p. 525.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p. 526; *DBI*, vol. XXXVI, p. 71.

⁵⁶ *DBI*, vol. XXXVI, p. 71; Robertson, *Il Gran Cardinale*, p. 191. Like Niccolò Circignani, who worked in the Della Corgna family palaces in 1560s, Alessi had been commissioned by Ascanio della Corgna, Marquis of Castiglione del Lago, to build the family palace in Città della Pieve in 1555, and to reconstruct his palace in Castiglione del Lago in 1563.

⁵⁷ A. Santosuosso, 'An Account of the Election of Paul IV to the Pontificate', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 31, 1978, p. 492.

⁵⁸ On August 1, 1575 Giacomo Boncompagni was appointed captain general of the cavalry in Milan by Philip II; J.R. Hale, 'Andrea Palladio, Polybius and Julius Caesar', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, xl, 1977, p. 241; Dandele, *Spanish Rome: 1500-1700*, p. 76: "At the same time, he [Giacomo Boncompagni] was also indebted to the king for a benefice of 7,000 escudos which he held from a church in Spain".

⁵⁹ N. Hadjinicolaou, 'Saint Francis receiving the Stigmata', in *El Greco in Italy and Italian Art*, p. 524, no 43: "sono del Ilmo Monsignor Degli Oddi ('I belong to his Excellency Monsignor Degli Oddi'); the

painting, the reference to the Degli Oddi family is significant, and suggests that the picture was made while Domenicos was still in Rome. Together with the Della Corgna, the Degli Oddi were one of the most powerful families from Perugia in papal service. It has been suggested that it was Giulio Clovio who had acted as intermediary between the painter and the Degli Oddi family, given that he had visited Perugia between 1532 and 1534, when his patron, Cardinal Grimani, was papal nuncio there⁶⁰. Many years had elapsed, however, since Clovio's sojourn in Perugia, so a more plausible candidate is Cardinal Fulvio della Corgna, who was in close contact with both the Degli Oddi and Cardinal Farnese. As mentioned above, the Della Corgna together with the Degli Oddi and the Anastagi had formed a number of influential friendships among the Roman prelates⁶¹.

In 1572, Count Gisberto degli Oddi was sent as permanent ambassador to Rome⁶², and it is perfectly possible that as a count and ambassador he is the 'Excellency' referred to on the back of the St. Francis picture. The word 'Monsignor', which was not an ecclesiastic title but an honorific one⁶³, may have been granted to the count by the pope for his loyalty and the services his family offered to the Church. If Gisberto degli Oddi was indeed the patron of Domenicos' *St. Francis*, the fact that he hurriedly left Rome in 1573 to attend to his family business and a lawsuit in Perugia⁶⁴ could be used as a *terminus ante quem* for the dating of the picture. As with the similar small-scale pictures discussed earlier, the size of the Naples picture and its support material (panel) suggests that it served as a finished *modello*, sent to Monsignor degli Oddi with an eye to gaining a commission for a larger painting. The choice of subject matter would have been highly appropriate, since the Degli Oddi

name 'Il Greco' was added in the same handwriting under this statement"; Hadjinicolaou, 'Saint Francis receiving the Stigmata', in *El Greco: Transformation and Identity*, p. 358, no 9. There is also another small version of similar dimensions (28.8×20.6cm), with the same subject painted on panel, and signed at the lower left in Greek capital letters, which is now in a private collection; *El Greco*, [exhibited only in New York, 2004], p. 102, no 11.

⁶⁰ *El Greco: Transformation and Identity*, p. 358: "Mariani has already linked El Greco's painting presented here to Giulio Clovio's stay in Perugia in 1531 and suggested that it was commissioned from the artist through his intervention"; Giononi-Visani & Gamulin, *Giorgio Giulio Clovio: Miniaturist of the Renaissance*, p. 36. The Degli Oddi family coats of arms, representing a lion rampant, have been found in the lower portico of the inner courtyard of the Villa Farnese at Caprarola; Partridge, 'The Farnese Circular Courtyard at Caprarola: God, Geopolitics, Genealogy, and Gender', pp. 272, 274, no 20; p. 291, note 59.

⁶¹ Black, 'Perugia and Papal Absolutism in Sixteenth Century', p. 525.

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 524-525.

⁶³ E. Beck, 'The Ecclesiastical Hat in Heraldry and Ornament before the Beginning of the 17th Century', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 22, 1913, pp. 338-344.

⁶⁴ Black, 'Perugia and Papal Absolutism in the Sixteenth Century', p. 525.

family, like the Della Corgna, had close links to the main Franciscan church of Perugia, S. Francesco al Prato, and had a family chapel there⁶⁵. If indeed the Naples picture was done for Gisberto degli Oddi, his departure from Rome in 1573 would have been a considerable setback for Domenicos.

Perhaps more than any other picture, the Copenhagen *Portrait of a Man* (fig. 49) connects Domenicos with the scholarly elite of Rome in the 1570s. The following analysis of the portrait attempts not only to identify the sitter, but more importantly to speculate about the painter's clients after 1572. It has recently been argued that the picture portrays the architect Andrea Palladio (1508-1580), rather than the Neapolitan scholar Giovanni Battista Porta (c.1542-1597), author of the treatise *De Humana Physiognomonia*, who had previously been suggested as the sitter⁶⁶. While the identification with Palladio has its merits, the iconographical affinities between the Copenhagen picture and the *Portrait of Giulio Clovio* in Naples⁶⁷ lead us to date the Copenhagen portrait to the years between 1572 and 1575, at which point Palladio would have been 64 to 67 years old, considerably older than the man in the Copenhagen picture. In addition, the man's facial features do not correspond to those of Palladio, according to an engraving by Giovanni Battista Mariotti and Francesco Zucchi (1749) after Giovanni Battista Maganza⁶⁸ (fig. 53). The engraving represents a bald man with a long, thin face, quite different from the round-faced, bulky man of Domenicos' portrait. Besides, the hypothesis that the portrait depicts Palladio implies a second sojourn by the Cretan painter in Venice between 1572 and 1576, a theory for which there is no evidence.

In the Copenhagen portrait, Domenicos has depicted a sturdy man, in three-quarter length, against a neutral greyish background, looking directly and solemnly at the viewer. He is resting his left hand on a book with ribbons, under which there is a sharp pen, placed on a small wooden table. The man is wearing a black suit with a soft, loose, white collar and linen cuffs, and a cloak of the same colour over the top of it. His face is round with a big, long nose, thick eyebrows above rather big eyes, small

⁶⁵ Less convincing is the argument that the choice of the subject was related to the revival of the Franciscan movement, that it "started in the mid-1550s and grew considerably between 1580 and 1630"; Hadjinicolaou, 'Saint Francis Receiving the Stigmata', in *El Greco in Italy and Italian Art*, p. 523; Hadjinicolaou, 'Saint Francis Receiving the Stigmata', in *El Greco Identity and Transformation*, p. 357.

⁶⁶ N. Hadjinicolaou, 'Portrait of a Man', in *El Greco in Italy and Italian Art*, pp. 538-540, with earlier bibliography.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 372-373.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, p. 370, fig. 3.

ears and a receding hairline of dark brown hair. The painter represents the man's face with delicacy and softness to the degree that the spectator fails to notice a slight movement of his thin lips, which form a half-hidden smile. In this way, his face looks less sober and thoughtful, and creates an impression of animation and mobility. Threads of white lines on his beard and on the hair at his temples indicate that he is a middle-aged man, probably in his late forties. The painter presents a scholar in his study, standing, not sitting, in an interior with a small table, against the background of a plain wall. The space behind him is shallow and solid, leading the viewer to concentrate on his face with a dignified expression, on the quiet though calculating expression of his eyes.

It is my contention that the Copenhagen portrait represents Benito Arias Montano⁶⁹, who was born in 1527, and was therefore between forty-five and forty-eight years old at the time of the execution of the portrait in 1572-1575. The scholar came to Rome in May 1572 and stayed until September of that year⁷⁰, coming back for a second time from June 1575 until May/June 1576. The book on the table, an undeniable sign of his profession as a scholar, probably stands metonymically for his *Biblia Polyglota* which was completed in 1571, while the pen under the book alludes to his personal involvement in the ambitious project. The gesture of his right hand, which generates the sense of an arrested moment, an impression of vivid actuality, implies that he is engaged in a conversation with the spectator, or an ideal companion in the room, about serious issues, perhaps the defense of his controversial Bible. The smile playing lightly over his face is probably a sign of his successful defense of the Polyglot Bible in May 1572.

To put our theory to the test, we should compare the Copenhagen portrait with known representations of Montano, such as the engraving by Philip Galle after Pieter Pourbus (1524-1584) in the Rijksmuseum⁷¹ (fig. 54), the engraving by Jan Wierix

⁶⁹ Xavier Bray failed to state who it was who first identified the Copenhagen sitter with Montano, even though he mentioned that the identification of the man with Giovanni Battista Porta was first proposed by Wandel and the identification with Palladio was by Willumsen; he also rushed to reject the identification of the Copenhagen sitter with Montano stating that "there is no record of Orsini having owned such a portrait by El Greco, which should anyway have shown him in clerical dress, and there is little in common between this portrait and an engraving of Arias Montano", referring to Montano's engraving included in Reker's book; X. Bray, 'Portrait of a Man, about 1576', in *El Greco*, [New York/London, 2004], p. 264.

⁷⁰ On May 1 1572 Pius V died, and twelve days later Gregory XIII, who would follow a pro-Spanish policy, was elected; B. Rekers, *Benito Arias Montano (1527-1598)*, London & Leiden, 1972, p. 56.

⁷¹ Galle's engraving can be found in Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel as well as in the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections in Princeton University Library. Galle's image is

(1549-c.1618) in Bibliothèque Royale Albert Ier (c.1570, Cabinet des Estampes, Brussels) (fig. 55), and the anonymous picture in the Escorial⁷². Wierix's engraving is of particular importance for the identification of the Copenhagen sitter, because the young engraver must have known Montano in person, since he was working at Plantin's shop when Montano arrived there in 1568 to oversee the production of the Polyglot Bible. What is more, Wierix had a hand in engraving some of the images and borders of the 1571 edition of Montano's *Humanae salutis monumenta*, as well as the frontispieces of the second, fourth and fifth volumes of the *Biblia Polyglota*⁷³. Tellingly, Wierix's engraving depicts Montano in three-quarter length, holding a book in his left hand and resting his right hand on a table with other books; he is dressed not in clerical dress⁷⁴, but in the same sober buttoned costume, with the white soft collar and white cuffs, in which Domenicos presents his sitter. Although the engravings by Galle and Wierix depict a man slightly younger than the sitter in the Copenhagen portrait, in all three images we can recognize the features of Montano: the round face, the characteristic nose, the short beard, the receding hairline. The similarities between the Copenhagen picture and Wierix's engraving are especially marked in the formation of the large body, the thick eyebrows, the high forehead, and notably in the long, rather bulbous nose. The fact that the Copenhagen portrait was not listed in any Italian inventory suggests that it was probably sent away immediately after its execution. In this light it is surely not a coincidence that the painting first appeared at auction in May 1641 (lot 14) in Antwerp⁷⁵, the city where Montano had spent many years of his life.

Using a limited number of attributes, Domenicos gives emphasis to the sitter's character, trying to describe with his brush Montano's inner qualities as a free-thinking and nonchalant scholar. Indeed, Montano detested repression and violence in politics and religion⁷⁶, and although he was an earlier admirer of the Duke of Alba's suppression in the Flanders, he changed his views and advised the Spanish court to

also of particular importance because he was in close contact with Montano; M.P. McDonald, 'The Print Collection of Philip II at the Escorial', *Print Quarterly*, 15, 1998, p. 20.

⁷² All the pictures of Montano used for the comparison are included in S. Hänsel, *Der spanische Humanist Benito Arias Montano (1527-1598) und die Kunst*, Munster, 1991, figs. 89, 90, 92.

⁷³ K.L. Bowen & D. Imhof, 'Reputation and Wage: The Case of Engravers Who Worked for the Plantin-Moretus Press', *Simiolus*, 30, 2003, pp. 161-195.

⁷⁴ The argument that El Greco "should anyway have shown him [Montano] in clerical dress" is therefore not valid, Bray in *El Greco* [New York/London, 2004], p. 264.

⁷⁵ *El Greco in Italy and Italian Art*, p. 538.

⁷⁶ Rekers, *Benito Arias Montano (1527-1598)*, p. 23.

follow a milder course of action, showing mercy and understanding ⁷⁷ . Correspondingly, the thoughtful gaze of the Copenhagen sitter, his half hidden smile, together with his unpretentious costume impart erudition, refinement, forbearance and moderation. Moreover, the eloquent gesture of his right hand shows that he has the quality of a good deliberator, who can exhibit sound judgment about public affairs ('euboulia') and prudence, or better 'phronesis' ('φρόνησις'), the Aristotelian virtue that involved the practical perception of appropriate action in particular circumstances⁷⁸. He is not only contemplative but also prudent, not only devoted to theory, as the book on the table suggests, but also to practice. To solve the problem of representing the sitter's inner qualities and at the same time achieving effects of naturalism and three-dimensionality – the visible and the invisible - the painter used, as before, a restricted palette of colours, including browns, black and greyish, white and flesh tones.

Moreover, the use of the three-quarter length format for the above portraits can be taken as a painterly equivalent to the bust form and the herms discussed by Fulvio in his *Imagines*, where the form of 'square' and consequently of the cube - the typical shape of herms - is associated with virtue and wisdom of illustrious men, 'which does not waver or change'⁷⁹. The tension between form and meaning, between the true likeness of a man and his character was again discussed in the fifteenth chapter of Aristotle's *Poetics*. There, the philosopher formulated a complex idea of imitation, and advised his audience to follow the example of good portrait painters, who reproduce the form of the original, without losing its true likeness (XV, 8). Thus, 'mimesis', the representation of a tragic hero – or a portrayed man in our case – involved not only the replication of his physical resemblance, but also a presentation of his character and spirit. Xenophon also thought that the character of a sitter could be represented in a picture, even though a person's qualities are not visible⁸⁰. And Philostratus the Younger wrote later that the distinguished master 'must be able to discern the signs of men's character even though they are silent'⁸¹. Succeeding these

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 24-26.

⁷⁸ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, VI, vii, 7: "[prudence] must also take account of particular facts, since it is concerned with action, and action deals with particular things"; *ibid*, VI, viii, 5: "...Prudence includes a knowledge of particular facts, and this is derived from experience, which a young man does not possess".

⁷⁹ Orsini, *Imagines et elogia virorum illustrium*, Praefatio, p. 6, where the word 'square' is in Greek, 'τετράγωνο /tetragonon'.

⁸⁰ Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, III, 10, 1-5, pp. 245-247.

⁸¹ Philostratus the Younger, *Imagines*, Proemium, III, 20, pp. 282-283.

authors, Pliny the Elder recounted that the painter Aristides of Thebes was the first who depicted the mind ('animus'), feelings ('sensus'), character ('the Greek ethe'), and passions ('perturbationes') of a person⁸², while his contemporary, Apelles, was so famous for his lifelike portraits that the grammarian Apio was able to discern not only the ages of the sitters, but also to predict the time of their death⁸³.

The above ideas on portraiture would have been very familiar to the scholarly world to which Fulvio belonged when Domenicos was associated with him in Rome. Surely, it is no coincidence that the painter chose the elongated bust form, lengthened to the waist or slightly lower for the portraits that he painted in Rome in 1570s (with the exception of the full-length *Portrait of Vincenzo Anastagi*). Not only did this form heighten the illusionism, but it may also have been understood as a reference to Orsini's herms of illustrious men. Like the fragmentary representations in Fulvio's *Imagines*, Domenicos suggested that what was visible in the portraits of his illustrious men was part of a larger whole, that there was more than met the eye. It is entirely possible, therefore, that following Fulvio's above-mentioned ideas about virtue, El Greco created portraits which served not only as documentary records of the physiognomy of the sitters, but also as exaltations of their virtues. One can see this not only in the *Portrait of Giulio Clovio*, in which the aged miniaturist is portrayed holding the *Book of Hours* against a window opening – a portrait type that can be traced back to northern Italian, and particularly Venetian, tradition - but also in the more minimalist and modern Copenhagen portrait. It is evident from the latter that Domenicos was gradually more concerned with the sitter's personality than with the decorative aspect of portraiture. In addressing the difficult issue of representing one's intellect without employing external emblems, signs and symbols, a fairly high level of erudition was involved. Tellingly, Domenicos wrote on the margin of Vitruvius' *De architectura* that painting is a superior art, because it not only 'does everything' but also it 'deals with the impossible'⁸⁴. Although it is not clear what the word

⁸² Pliny, *Natural History*, Book XXXV, xxxvi, 98, pp. 333-334.

⁸³ *Ibid*, Book XXXV, xxxvi, 88, p. 327.

⁸⁴ Mariás & Bustamante, *Las ideas artísticas*, p. 80: "...la pintura trata de lo imposible". In this respect, Domenicos agreed with Ligorio on the superiority of painting; the Neapolitan had written that painting was 'the princess of art'; Coffin, *Pirro Ligorio: The Renaissance Artist, Architect, and Antiquarian*, p. 141.

‘impossible’ means in this context, I may suggest that the Cretan was implying that painting deals with both the visible and the invisible⁸⁵.

To sum up, we can posit that, through Fulvio’s personal intervention, Domenicos came into contact with a circle of important patrons in Rome after 1572 who, however, neither directly connected with the Papal Court, nor belonged to the local Roman aristocracy. Yet, this circle of men, who were deeply involved in Rome’s politics, either as members of the Perugian oligarchy or members of the Spanish community, required a refined artist who could satisfy their demands for self-glorification and supplement their collections with sophisticated art. It is likely that they had a preference for movable works of art, given that they did not possess big family palaces in Rome that could be decorated with frescoes. Promoting the professional ‘persona’ of the learned painter, Domenicos proved that he was perfectly capable of creating highly elaborate images resting upon classical models. The study of Greek portraiture, based on both visual images and literary sources under Fulvio’s guidance, eventually affected the way Domenicos approached the representation of his sitters, leading him to attempt to render not only the body, but also the intellect. Exploring the possibility of using an austere palette of colours and the format of the three-quarter length portrait as a painterly equivalent to the bust form, Domenicos strove to achieve a penetrating characterization of the sitter by imparting an image of his mind.

⁸⁵ Marías, ‘El Greco’s Artistic Thought: From the Eyes of the Soul to the Eyes of Reason’, in *El Greco: Identity and Transformation*, p. 171.

Chapter 9 – Looking to Spain: Domenicos’ Later Acquaintances in Rome

In addition to the circles we outlined in the previous chapter, Domenicos also began to frequent members of the Spanish community who resided in Rome, many of whom had connections to both Fulvio Orsini and Federico Zuccaro. Among these acquaintances was almost certainly Pablo de Céspedes (1538/48-1608), who was a scholar as well as a painter, and the author of the treatise *Discurso de la comparación de la antigua y moderna pintura y escultura* (1604)¹. Céspedes had received a classical education, which involved a grounding in Greek, Hebrew and Latin², and, while in Rome³, he studied the antiquities on offer, alongside modern painting by the likes of Raphael and Michelangelo. Céspedes also maintained close contact with literary notables, such as Fulvio Orsini, whom he visited in the Farnese Palace⁴, had connections with Roman art dealers⁵, and kept an eye on ancient fragments that came onto the market. Considering the close relationship between Domenicos and Orsini, the Spaniard must have come to know the Cretan through the Roman scholar. Undoubtedly, the two artists had much in common. Not only were they both foreigners and of the same age, but they had arrived in Rome around the same time and were both interested in studying the city’s art treasures, ancient and modern. Céspedes also seems to have shared Domenicos’ interest in architecture, judging from the great number of architectural treatises found in the Spaniard’s library, which outnumbered those on painting⁶. More importantly, however, they both believed in the nobility of their profession, and promoted the model of the learned artist. It is noticeable that they went to Spain around the same time, and both contributed to the transmission of Italian ideas about the status of the artist, attempting to change

¹ A. Palomino, *Lives of the Eminent Spanish Painters and Sculptors*, Engl. transl. N. Ayala Mallory, Cambridge, 1987, p. 63.

² *Ibid*, p. 62; J. Brown, *Images and Ideas in Seventeenth-Century Spanish Painting*, Princeton, 1978, pp. 30-32.

³ Hänsel, *Der spanische Humanist Benito Arias Montano*, p. 134, where the author mentions that Céspedes arrived in Rome around 1568-1569; Agosti & Hirst, ‘Michelangelo, Piero d’ Argenta and the ‘Stigmatisation of St. Francis’’, p. 683; Brown, *Images and Ideas in Seventeenth-Century Spanish Painting*, pp. 30-31.

⁴ J. Rubio Lapaz, *Pablo de Céspedes y su círculo: Humanismo y contrareforma en la cultura Andaluza del Rinacimiento al Barocco*, Granada, 1993, p. 29, note 25.

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 28, note 23; F.M. Quilez Corella, ‘La cultura artística de Pablo de Céspedes’, *Boletín del Museo e Instituto Camón Aznar*, 39, 1990, pp. 65-86.

⁶ P. Muller, ‘Pablo de Céspedes: A letter of 1577’, *The Burlington Magazine*, 138, 1996, pp. 89-91, esp. p. 89, note 4; for Céspedes’ enthusiasm for the art of Quattrocento, G. Agosti, ‘Su Mantegna, 5 (Intorno a Vasari)’, *Prospettiva*, lxxx, 1995, pp. 61-89, esp. pp. 61-67.

longstanding attitudes toward the dignity of the visual arts⁷. Yet there are other points of convergence between the two artists that are worth considering, as they point to the broader artistic circles that El Greco was frequenting during this time.

For one thing, while in Rome Céspedes came to know Federico Zuccaro, most probably through their mutual friend, Cesare Arbasia (1547-1607)⁸, whom Federico described in a letter to Giambologna as a ‘most notable painter’ (‘valorosissimo pittore’)⁹. Arbasia’s connection to Céspedes extended to a close collaboration on the façade of a residence in the Corso¹⁰, decorated in the manner of Polidoro da Caravaggio, and the frescoes for the Orsini Chapel in the church of S. Trinità dei Monti¹¹. These works, and the time he spent studying ancient and modern art, as well as fresco technique, gave him an entry into the Zuccaro circle. A focal point for this group of cultivated artists was the house and garden of Sebastiano Caccini and his wife Brigida Bralia on the Corso¹². It is extremely likely that Domenicos too would have been among their guests, along with Pasquale Cati (c.1550-c.1620) from Jesi¹³,

⁷ For Céspedes’ role see M.N. Taggard, ‘‘Ut Pictura Poesis’’: Artists’ Status in Early Modern Cordoba’, *Artibus et Historiae*, 17, 1996, pp. 69-82, esp. pp. 73-75.

⁸ Aurigemma, ‘Lettere di Federico Zuccari’, p. 212, note 24. For Cesare Arbasia see *DBI*, vol. III, pp. 729-730; M. Bressy, ‘Giunte a Cesare Arbasia pittore Saluzzese del Cinquecento’, *L’Arte*, lxii, 1963, pp. 321-334.

⁹ D. Heikamp, ‘I viaggi di Federico Zuccaro’, *Paragone*, 105, 1958, pp. 40-63, esp. p. 57; Muller, ‘Pablo de Céspedes: A letter of 1577’, p. 90; Waźbiński, ‘Lo studio –La scuola fiorentina di Federico Zuccari’, pp. 288, 336 note 66; Federico met Giambologna in 1565 in Florence for the wedding preparations of Francesco de’ Medici and they were tied with a close friendship. It seems that Arbasia and Zuccaro had collaborated in a number of cases, the most important of which was probably the decoration of the dome of the Florentine cathedral in 1575; Acidini Luchinat, *Taddeo e Federico Zuccari*, vol. II, p. 116, note 25, rejects such a theory.

¹⁰ Céspedes started his career in Rome as a façade painter, following the lead of Polidoro da Caravaggio, Taddeo and Federico Zuccaro and Raffaellino da Reggio; G. Baglione, *Le vite de’ pittori, scultori et architetti dal pontificato di Gregorio XIII del 1572 in fino a’ tempi di Papa Urbano Ottavo nel 1642*, ed. J. Hess & H. Röttgen, Vatican, 1995, p. 30; Palomino, *Lives of the Eminent Spanish Painters and Sculptors*, p. 63; F. Titi, *Descrizione delle pitture, sculture e architetture esposte al pubblico in Roma*, Rome, 1763, p. 379; M. Bressy, ‘Cesare Arbasia: Pittore Saluzzese del Cinquecento (1547-1607)’, *L’Arte*, lx, 1961, pp. 46-47, note 111. For Raffaellino’s career as façade painter, see Wollesen-Wisch, ‘The Archiconfraternita del Gonfalone and its Oratory in Rome’, pp. 222-247; Marciari, ‘Raffaellino da Reggio in the Vatican’, p. 187.

¹¹ The main altarpiece of the Orsini Chapel depicts the *Deposition of Christ* by Daniele da Volterra, while Céspedes painted *Adam and Eve*, scenes from the life of the Virgin and the four *Evangelists* on the dome of the chapel; D. Angulo Iñiguez, ‘Los frescos de Céspedes en la iglesia de la Trinidad de los Montes de Roma’, *Archivo español de arte*, xi, 1967, pp. 305-307.

¹² Caccini from Pistoia was the owner of a house that Federico was renting and he seems to have acted as his agent when the painter was away from Rome; Aurigemma, ‘Lettere di Federico Zuccari’, pp. 207-208; Muller, ‘Pablo de Céspedes: a letter of 1577’, p. 90: “Céspedes first mentions an earlier letter sent from Barcelona to Caccini by way of a certain Bonfil...”

¹³ Among Cati’s most important paintings from this period were the *Martyrdom of St. Lawrence* for the church of S. Lorenzo in Panisperna (1575?) and the decoration of the Altemps Chapel in S. Maria in Trastevere (1588-1589); a drawing of his, depicting a *Deposition*, was found in Antonio Tronsarelli’s collection; Lafranconi, ‘Antonio Tronsarelli: A Roman Collector of the Late Sixteenth Century’, pp. 540, 547, no 98, fig. 45.

who would later work with El Greco's pupil-assistant, Lattanzio Bonastri, at Palazzo Altemps¹⁴. That El Greco did indeed frequent this environment is hinted at in the opinions he expressed later in his 'postille', which were more or less in harmony with the ideas expounded by Zuccaro and Céspedes¹⁵. Like El Greco, Céspedes respected Taddeo's art, and his style shows signs of Federico's influence¹⁶, while all three artists, members of the Accademia di San Luca¹⁷, would defend the notion that painting was an intellectual undertaking that belonged to the liberal arts, and required practice and theory. The fact that in 1586-87 Federico would visit both Céspedes in Guadalupe¹⁸ and El Greco in Toledo surely reflects that their association in Rome was not merely circumstantial.

While in Rome, Céspedes became very close to Benito Arias Montano, one of the leading intellectual lights of the Spanish community in the city¹⁹, whom we have encountered in the previous chapter as the possible sitter of El Greco's Copenhagen portrait. Proof of the amicable association between Montano and Céspedes can be gleaned from the latter's reference to Montano as 'particular patrón mío' ('my special patron')²⁰; and Céspedes would later refer to this long-lasting friendship²¹. Montano also knew and admired Federico Zuccaro, for whom he composed a Latin poem that

¹⁴ Like Bonastri, Cati painted scenes from the life of Moses (1591) at Palazzo Altemps; Scoppola & Vordemann, *Palazzo Altemps*, pp. 62-73; it is likely that Bonastri introduced Domenicos to other painters from Siena as well, who gathered around the Sienese archconfraternity of S. Caterina da Siena in Via Giulia.

¹⁵ For Céspedes' ideas see Rubio Lapaz, *Pablo de Céspedes y su círculo*, pp. 171-176.

¹⁶ Muller, 'Pablo de Céspedes: a letter of 1577', p. 90.

¹⁷ Like Domenicos and Federico, Céspedes was registered in the Accademia di S. Luca; D. Martínez de la Peña y González, 'Artistas Españoles en la Academia de San Lucas (documentos de los siglos XVI y XVII)', *Archivo Español de Arte*, xli, 1968, pp. 297, 306; the formation of the Accademia di San Luca served a variety of purposes, including the care and teaching of the young artists who were arriving in Rome; Williams, 'The Artist as Worker in Sixteenth-Century Italy', in *Taddeo and Federico Zuccaro: Artists Brothers in Renaissance Rome*, pp. 99-101.

¹⁸ Zuccaro was describing in a letter dated in May 1586 his visit to the convent of Guadalupe, where he met Céspedes, who was by then *racionero* (prebendary) in the Cathedral of Cordova; Heikamp, 'Vicende di Federigo Zuccari', p. 228, doc. VI.

¹⁹ Céspedes acquired his broad education at the University of Alcalá de Henares, a centre of humanistic study; Montano had also been educated there. For Céspedes' education see Muller, 'Pablo de Céspedes: a letter of 1577', p. 89.

²⁰ S. Hänsel, 'Federico Zuccari, Benito Arias Montano und der Lamento de la Pittura', in *Der Maler Federico Zuccari*, p. 152.

²¹ Palomino, *Lives of the Eminent Spanish Painters and Sculptors*, p. 66, where it is quoted what Céspedes said about Montano: "Arias Montano, a most learned man, whom I revere as much for his singular erudition and incomparable kindness as for the great friendship we had for so many years"; Rubio Lapaz, *Pablo de Céspedes y su círculo*, p. 29; Hänsel, *Der spanische Humanist Benito Arias Montano*, p. 134, where the author suggests that Céspedes and Montano may have met through Ambrosio Morales, with whom Céspedes came into close contact when he was studying at Alcalá de Henares; Morales had also written comments on Montano's work, *Rhetoricorum libri IIII*.

was included in Federico's *Lamento de la Pittura* in 1579²². In addition to artists, Montano's extensive circle of friendships in Rome included the Spanish ambassador Juan de Zúñiga, the theologian Pedro de Fuentidueñas, the Cardinals Granvelle and Sirleto, the Spanish Dominican scholar Alfonso Chacón (1530-1599), who was not only close to Fulvio Orsini, but also knew Céspedes well²³. Given these connections, Montano, who was a great bibliophile himself and had been charged by Philip II with the task of buying books for the Escorial library²⁴, would have been keen to visit the Farnese collection, and he clearly knew many members of the cardinal's circle personally. This is attested to by the fact that Montano owned a drawing of a *Crucifixion* by Giulio Clovio²⁵ and, in a letter to Fulvio Orsini on December 29 1576, he sends his regards not only to Clovio, but also to Cardinal Gianfrancesco Gambara, Bishop of Viterbo and owner of villa Lante at Bagnaia, and Tommaso Cavalieri and his son Mario²⁶.

Written from Madrid, the letter shows that the acquaintance between Orsini and Montano extended over a period of time, and did not come to an end with the latter's return to Spain. The two scholars moreover shared a passion for the study of ancient coins, weights and measures, geography and particularly cartography. As he had already included biblical maps in the *Apparatus* of his Polyglot Bible²⁷, Montano must have been particularly intrigued by Domenicos' *View of Mount Sinai*, which he

²² Hänsel, 'Federico Zuccari, Benito Arias Montano und der 'Lamento de la Pittura'', in *Der Maler Federico Zuccari*, pp. 147-157; it seems that Gabriel Terrades, the printer of the *Lament of Painting*, together with Niccolò Gaddi, to whom it was dedicated, and Montano were all good friends of Federico. For the *Lament of Painting*, reproduced by Cornelis Cort, Heikamp, 'Vicende di Federigo Zuccari', pp. 181-184; Gerards-Nelissen, 'Federigo Zuccaro and the Lament of Painting', p. 44; Hänsel, 'Federico Zuccari, Benito Arias Montano und der 'Lamento de la Pittura'', p. 152.

²³ Rekers, *Benito Arias Montano*, pp. 55-56. Chacón, who was an expert on Graeco-Roman and Paleo-Christian antiquity, came to Rome in 1567 under Pius V and "served as a confessor for the Vatican in the *penitenziere* for some time"; Dandele, *Spanish Rome: 1500-1700*, p. 82; Rubio Lapaz, *Pablo de Céspedes y su círculo*, p. 33, where it is suggested that Chacón may have introduced Céspedes into St. Philip Neri's circle in Rome. Members of Neri's circle, such as Cesare Baronio, Pompeo Ugonio, Chacón and Antonio Bosio, participated in the excavations of the catacombs in Rome; Zuccari, 'La politica culturale dell' Oratorio romano nella seconda metà del Cinquecento', p. 91.

²⁴ During his second trip to Rome in 1575 Montano acquired 3,000 books, which he sent them to Spain; Rekers, *Benito Arias Montano*, p. 158, document 91.

²⁵ Clovio's *Crucifixion* aroused Francisco Pacheco's admiration; Hänsel, 'Federico Zuccari, Benito Arias Montano und der 'Lamento de la Pittura'', in *Der Maler Federico Zuccari*, p. 151, note 30.

²⁶ De Nohac, *La Bibliothèque de Fulvio Orsini*, p. 60, note 1, (Vat. 4105, f.75); Brown, 'El Greco and Toledo', in *El Greco of Toledo*, p. 94; Hänsel, 'Federico Zuccari, Benito Arias Montano und der 'Lamento de la Pittura'', in *Der Maler Federico Zuccari*, p. 151, note 29, where the author points out that Montano's letter to Orsini was written on December 19 – not 29 – 1576.

²⁷ Z. Shalev, 'Sacred Geography, Antiquarianism and Visual Erudition: Benito Arias Montano and the Maps in the Antwerp Polyglot Bible', *Imago Mundi*, 55, 2003, pp. 56-80, esp. p. 59, where in volume eight of the *Apparatus*, Montano included four maps: a world map, Canaan at the time of Abraham, the land of Israel, and Jerusalem at the time of Solomon.

could have seen in Fulvio's collection²⁸. It is not too fanciful to suggest that Montano saw El Greco's picture as the painterly counterpart of the frontispieces of his *Biblia Polyglota*, which represented crucial moments of divine will and were concerned with the theme of the journey, actual and metaphorical, of the revealed Word. The second frontispiece of the first volume of the Bible (c.1568), for example, which contained scenes from the Old Testament, including an image of Moses receiving the Tablets of the Law, were closely interwoven with the salvific promises of the Lord's commandments²⁹. This emphasis on images as a means of knowing scriptural truth can also be applied to El Greco's picture. His use of the bird's-eye view, employed to render the sacred function of the place as 'religious community' ('religionis communio'), was also in tune with Montano's preference for perspectival views. A map of Jerusalem in the eighth volume of the Bible, for example, was, like Domenicos' *View*, set in a rocky landscape and seen from a high viewpoint, a convention which may indicate Netherlandish roots. As neither Montano nor El Greco had ever travelled to the Holy Land or Mount Sinai, and therefore had no first-hand experience of the landscape, they must have based their representations on maps and topographical images made by contemporary travellers-pilgrims³⁰, connecting vicariously to the distant Levant. Montano would certainly have been impressed by El Greco's atmospheric, cloud-laden landscape with the rendering of the pilgrimages' meeting in the foreground. The scene allowed its viewers to chart and participate mentally in the depicted itinerary, and in this respect, it fitted neatly into the idea of the 'geographia sacra', which Montano introduced into his Bible and which entailed extensive illustrations and maps relating to the questions raised by the biblical text³¹. In this regard, El Greco's *View of Mount Sinai* appears to have been fully consonant with Montano's conviction of the interpretative power of topographical images, as they improved the reader's comprehension of the biblical events. With this in mind, I

²⁸ De Nolhac, 'Les collections de Fulvio Orsini', p. 433, no 39.

²⁹ *Scripture for the Eyes: Bible Illustration in Netherlandish Prints of the Sixteenth Century*, exh.cat., ed. J. Clifton & W.S. Melion, New York, 2009, p. 112, fig. 2b.

³⁰ Montano's view of Jerusalem was based on a map by Peter Laickstein, who travelled to Holy Land in 1556, while El Greco used Giovanni Battista Fontana's engraving, which probably relied on a book by Christophe Fürer von Haimendorf, who also travelled to the Levant in 1565-1566. For Montano, see Shalev, 'Sacred Geography, Antiquarianism and Visual Erudition', pp. 61-63; for the view of Jerusalem in Montano's Polyglot Bible see *ibid*, fig. 4; for El Greco's image, see Gardner von Teuffel, 'El Greco's View of Mount Sinai as Independent Landscape', p. 168. Domenicos' lifelong interest in cartography can be further confirmed by his *View and Plan of Toledo* (1610-1614) in Museo de El Greco in Toledo.

³¹ Shalev, 'Sacred Geography, Antiquarianism and Visual Erudition', p. 67.

suggest that the *View of Mount Sinai* was the catalyst that brought the Spanish scholar and the Cretan artist together, and resulted in the commission of the Copenhagen portrait.

After the unfavourable verdict on his *Biblia Polyglota* in January 1576³² (which went against the provisional acceptance that had been granted in August 1572), Montano only remained in Rome until May of that year, when he travelled back to Spain, arriving home by July³³. It appears that Domenicos was seriously considering a change of scene around the same time. There were several reasons for this, including the fact that he was in his mid-thirties and he was not gaining the kind of work that he wanted to be doing. As a royal agent, Montano could have played a definitive role in the painter's decision to leave the papal city, and he could even have used his friendship with Juan de Zúñiga to further El Greco's chances of gaining favour back in Spain. Spanish ambassadors were much involved in the building of the Escorial, and often arranged for the passage of Italian artists to Spain³⁴. Exactly when Domenicos made the journey to Spain is unclear, but he must have travelled with a group, as was customary, given the dangers inherent in undertaking such long journeys. In a letter to Sebastiano Caccini on September 13, 1577, Céspedes vividly recounts his own experience of returning to Spain: 'we arrived home after a very long and tiring journey by land, fearing the whole way that we would be killed by bandits'³⁵. It seems likely that Domenicos and his assistant, Francesco Preboste, were invited to travel with Montano, who probably took the route through Genoa, one of Spain's firm allies in northern Italy. Céspedes used the same route several months later³⁶. Probably on the way to Genoa, Domenicos appears to have visited Siena, Florence, Parma and Modena, if his annotations on Vasari are anything to go by. It

³² Rekers, *Benito Arias Montano*, pp. 61, 80; the Jesuit Juan de Mariana was entrusted with the final judgement of the Polyglot Bible in August 1577, and pronounced it non-heretical, even though he criticised Montano on various issues (*ibid*, pp. 62-63).

³³ *Ibid*, pp. 80-81.

³⁴ Levin, *Agents of Empire*, pp. 183-199.

³⁵ Muller, 'Pablo de Céspedes: A Letter of 1577', Appendix, p. 91: "...siamo giunti nella patria doppo un viaggio molto lungo per terra, molto fastidioso, et con gran paura ad ogni passo d' esser assassinati di ladri...".

³⁶ Bressy, 'Cesare Arbasia', [1961], p. 64, note 111. Céspedes, who arrived in Cordova on August 12, 1577, had travelled through Genoa, where he stopped waiting for Arbasia to join him; Muller, 'Pablo de Céspedes: A Letter of 1577', pp. 89-90. Matteo Arbasia's *Self Portrait* in Saluzzo dated April 18, 1577 proves that Cesare Arbasia was still there in April and he probably met Céspedes later in Genoa (*ibid*, p. 90, note 15).

has also been suggested that Domenicos travelled from Genoa to Cartagena and from there he made his way to Madrid via Murcia³⁷.

Documents confirm the Cretan's presence in Toledo on July 2 1577, when he was commissioned to paint the *Disrobing of Christ* for the vestry of the cathedral in Toledo, and the paintings for the high altar in Santo Domingo el Antiguo. And yet, Toledo was not his first port of call in Spain. Given that his primary aim when he left Rome was probably to win royal favour, it follows that he must have arrived in Spain much earlier than July 1577. Indeed, on October 21 1576, his name appears in a register of supplicants requesting financial aid from the Royal Almoner ('limosnero mayor'), the dispenser of favours, at the court of Philip II in Madrid³⁸. This suggests that, while Montano's appointment as the head librarian at the Escorial in 1576 certainly raised the painter's high hopes of royal patronage, this did not immediately materialise. The fact that Montano was in Madrid³⁹ at the same time as Domenicos does suggest that the two men were still in contact, and that Montano provided a welcome bridge between the Madrid court and the world that the painter had left behind. For Domenicos, Montano was a polymath of Fulvio's calibre, with intense artistic interests, who could appreciate sophisticated images, such as the *Allegory of the Holy League*. And it is surely in this connection with the Spanish scholar that this recondite allegory of the Spanish-led victory in Lepanto should be interpreted⁴⁰, as it was painted with a view to securing an important royal commission. I think it is likely that the historical event of the victory of Lepanto, championed by the Spanish king, inspired Domenicos to devise an allegory which would provide him with the opportunity to demonstrate his refined technical skills, and more importantly his

³⁷ Marías, *Greco: Biographie d'un peintre extravagant*, p. 123.

³⁸ For the chronology see *El Greco*, [New York/London, 2004], p. 34: "año 1576. 21 de Octubre Dimo [Domenikos] Griego"; the grand almoner at the time was probably Don Luis Manrique. If Domenicos did stop in Madrid for some time, then the theory that he went to Toledo with specific contracts for work at the Cathedral and Santo Domingo el Antiguo cannot not be solid; for this theory, see Wethey, 'El Greco and the Portrait of Vincenzo Anastagi', p. 177; Mann, *El Greco and His Patrons*, p. 21: "Don Luis and El Greco signed in Rome the first contract for the altarpieces at Santo Domingo, and this commission directly motivated the artist's voyage to Spain...". If Domenicos was commissioned to paint the portrait of Vincenzo Anastagi in Rome in 1575 and he had already made some preliminary negotiations with Luis de Castilla for the decoration of S. Domingo in Toledo the same year in Rome, why would he ask for financial aid from the Royal Almoner in October 1576? For a different view, see Marías, *Greco: Biographie d'un peintre extravagant*, p. 126, where it is argued that Domenicos arrived in Madrid in June 1577; Marías, *El Greco in Toledo*, London, 2001, p. 47.

³⁹ De Nolhac, *La Bibliothèque de Fulvio Orsini*, p. 60, note 1.

⁴⁰ A. Blunt, 'El Greco's 'Dream of Philip II': An Allegory of the Holy League', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, iii, 1939-1940, pp. 58-69.

intellectual sophistication, as the picture required a certain exegetical ingenuity⁴¹. Although there is no overt reference to the naval battle of Lepanto against the Turks in the picture, the presence of the easily recognised figures of Philip II, the pope and the Doge of Venice, united in their duty to defend Christendom, definitely has political connotations. And the painter had no reason to include them all in the picture unless they were there to represent the Holy League. It is well known, for instance, that the Venetian-Spanish relations were unstable at this time due to mutual fear and mistrust; they even deteriorated after the glorious victory of the Holy League at Lepanto (1571)⁴². Venice had been proved an unreliable ally, having twice abandoned military alliances against Turks (1540, 1573). The Venetians furthermore remained friendly with the French, to the irritation of the Spanish. Thus, by including the Doge in his picture, El Greco probably intended to revive past memories of this important political alliance, rather than to remind the king of the Venetian's duplicity and repeated perfidy. By combining the representation of the visible – the three protagonists in the foreground- with the invisible – the devil in the foreground, Hell in the background and celestial Glory above- El Greco underlined the political-religious significance of this Spanish-led triumph, and promoted Philip II as the secular champion of Catholicism, and one of the pillar of the Christian Republic. And although Don John of Austria was the supreme commander of the League forces, superior to any papal or Venetian general, it seems that the representation of such a subject was not meant, as it has been argued⁴³, to honour the king's half-brother. Instead it should be seen as a glorification of the king himself, the man who had played a key role in the formation and achievements of the League, and could be the next prestigious patron of the Cretan painter. Read in this way, El Greco's *Allegory* seems to have drawn on Montano's ideas concerning three crucial points: that the devil had engineered the current threat to Christianity; that the Christian unity could be restored by Christ as the Prince of Peace; and that Philip II was the principal agent in this restorative project⁴⁴. It appears that Domenicos responded to these views by

⁴¹ I disagree with the view that the 'only possible intention' of El Greco's picture would be 'a theological one', as it depicted Philip II either awaiting the Last Judgment or contemplating his own private judgment; Mariás, *El Greco of Toledo*, p. 190.

⁴² Levin, *Agents of Empire*, pp. 13-42.

⁴³ Blunt, 'El Greco's 'Dream of Philip II' ', p. 68.

⁴⁴ Montano wrote in the first volume of his Bible that the holy word "reveals [God] as the divine author of everything good, who expels all that is evil, his son being high priest and conciliator", it "sets forth the whole plan and labor of human salvation fit to be conferred by Christ and obtained by the human race" and "that the [devil], author of all evils, and his ministers be given no opportunity of adding

painting an image which included the Evil -the devil and the Hell- on the right hand side, Christ - whose initials represent His omnipotent presence and protection of His Church - in Heaven, and Philip II as the restless defender of the Christian unity.

If Domenicos expected Montano to act as his own patron in Spain, he was disappointed. The royal librarian was in dire straits during this period, as the sale of his *Bible* had not gone well and Philip II had yet to pay him⁴⁵. In addition, he was sent to Lisbon on a diplomatic mission in January 1578⁴⁶ and he did not return to Madrid until September 1579. The combination of Montano's financial situation and his long absence from Spain probably prevented him from supporting Domenicos as effectively as he would have wished⁴⁷. If the Spanish scholar was not influential enough in helping the painter to find employment at the king's court, he did, however, bring him into contact with his close friend, Luis de Castilla⁴⁸, whom the Cretan had probably already met in Farnese circles in Rome. And this proved to be an important and fortuitous connection, since it was Castilla who would introduce Domenicos to his father Diego, the dean of the Toledo cathedral. At last, a major commission was about to materialise.

anything...to the [present] danger, God inspired Philip II...to consider how the sacred books, ancient languages, and best translations might diligently be gathered and composed, seeing that...the study of piety and of pure religion is acknowledged to be the principal, noblest, and firmest foundation for the establishment of the state"; *Scripture for the Eyes*, pp. 34-35, notes 67, 73.

⁴⁵ Rekers, *Benito Arias Montano*, p. 82.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. 39.

⁴⁷ Interestingly, as soon as Montano came back to Madrid, Domenicos was commissioned by the king to paint the *Martyrdom of St. Maurice* (c.1580) for the main church of the Escorial.

⁴⁸ Mann, *El Greco and his Patrons*, p. 30; Luis de Castilla, who returned to Spain in 1575, was appointed canon of the Cathedral of Cuenca; Kagan, 'The Toledo of El Greco, in *El Greco of Toledo*, pp. 62-63. For the close relationship between Luis de Castilla and Pedro Chacón, see A. Vegue y Goldoni, 'En torno a la figura del Greco', *Arte español*, xv, 1923, pp. 76, 78 in *El Greco: Documents on His Life and Work*, pp. 327, 329.

Conclusion

El Greco's close association with elite intellectual circles during all phases of his Spanish career suggests that an interest in erudition had already played a role in his intellectual development and stylistic metamorphosis before arriving in Spain. Considering El Greco from this perspective, I have focused on his Roman career, which has figured very little in recent scholarly studies, and I have taken a new look at his works, concentrating not only on the political, religious, historical and cultural context, but also on his interaction with humanists and artists living and working in Rome at the time. As we have seen, the 1560s and 1570s were a time of artistic vitality and humanistic learning in Rome, even though it was also characterised by political and religious turbulence. The popes, as spiritual and temporal leaders of the Catholic world, endeavoured to entrench the decrees of the Council of Trent abroad, and consolidate the structures of their government at home. When Domenicos arrived in the city in 1570, it was a lively centre, teeming with wealthy prelates, visitors, migrants, foreign agents, and noble ambassadors. The city also attracted connoisseurs, art dealers, engravers, young novices from all over Italy and northern Europe, and accomplished masters working in different media. And yet everything was changing from papacy to papacy, and this fluid social and political environment had a profound effect on the evolving profession of the artist.

The undeniable sensitivity of El Greco's brush led him to one of the most important patrons of art in Rome, Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, cardinal-protector of the Benedictines, the Servites, and of five Roman confraternities¹. Farnese was also patron of the Jesuit church of the *Gesù* and held five archbishoprics and nine bishoprics, a fact that allowed him to consolidate his power, increase his wealth, promulgate the Counter-Reformation ideas and, more importantly, pursue his own political agenda. In many respects, Alessandro was a characteristic representative of the post-Tridentine Church, which, as we saw in chapter one, was an assemblage of diverse and highly competitive institutions that allowed enough freedom for artists to adorn the palaces of prelates with sophisticated iconographical programmes, and for humanists to continue their antiquarian studies. As before, wealthy cardinals, such as

¹ The confraternities were the Gonfalone, S. Maria dell' Orazione e della Morte, SS. Crocifisso di San Marcello, Corpo di nostro Signore, and Concettione della Beata Vergine; Wollesen-Wisch, 'The Archiconfraternita del Gonfalone and Its Oratory in Rome: Art and Counter-Reformation Spiritual Values', p. 306.

Cardinal Farnese, continued to amass manuscripts and works of art, as a distinctive sign of virtue and nobility, and to maintain an extensive household of ‘letterati’, artists, lower dignitaries, and servants. In the city’s cosmopolitan atmosphere and in Farnese’s sophisticated household, Domenicos met a different ‘type’ of rival, one who promoted an elaborate profile in the vein of Apelles.

When Domenicos was granted accommodation in the Farnese Palace, one of the most distinguished family palaces of Rome, he was afforded a privilege that was the envy of a great many artists. Staying there was so rich in opportunity for him that both his intellectual development and his career path underwent drastic changes. To amplify this idea, I have proposed that Fulvio Orsini, who must have appreciated Domenicos’ talent and Greek background highly, played a decisive role in bringing the painter closer to the erudite world of Renaissance humanism. I have explored Fulvio’s tastes, by analysing his collection of books and works of art, and have considered his ideas expressed in his recently published *Imagines* (1570). The book represented an important conceptual change in cultural practices, whereby the constant comparison between texts and images signalled a new idea of culture based on visual evidence. It was surely Fulvio who first encouraged the Cretan to explore the link between visual representation and ancient texts. As the painter came closer to the scholar, Domenicos began to approach the writings of ancient authors as diverse as Xenophon, Aristotle, Philostratus, Cicero, Quintilian and Pliny in connection with the artistic attainments of antiquity. Another tenant of the palace, Mattheos Devaris, who might well have had a hand in recommending El Greco to Giulio Clovio, could also have helped the painter to promote his new profile by encouraging him to read more difficult texts, such as Homer and John Philoponus. I have also suggested that the display of this kind of breadth of knowledge was a strategy aimed at making the Cretan an estimable painter, someone to be taken seriously. Reading became the means of imbuing his work with scholarly dignity. Only through cultivation of intellect could Domenicos rise above the ranks of a mere artisan.

El Greco’s new and sophisticated professional identity also comes to light in his interest in architecture, which lasted until the end of his life. Architectural practice was regarded as the highest level of artistic activity, primarily by virtue of its connection to mathematics and geometry, and it is notable that all the leading painters of the Renaissance were also accomplished architects. Prime among these was Raphael, who was initially trained as a painter, enjoyed success as a courtier-painter,

and was later appointed architect of St. Peter's. So did Michelangelo and Pirro Ligorio, even though the latter first gained entry to Rome's intellectual circles through his broad knowledge of classical culture, and his experience as an antiquarian. In a similar fashion, Vasari too was an artist against whom Domenicos might measure himself, engaged as he was in both painting and writing a work that was much read and discussed among artists and men of letters. The harsh words directed against Vasari in the margins of his own copy of *Vite*, reveals a personal feud, and it should be remembered that self-promotion was often combined with a keen sense of artistic competition. Yet, relationships between artists did not begin and end as a matter of personal antagonism; they had a context in contemporary debates over art, and El Greco's aspiration to foster a sophisticated professional profile with certain cultural claims indicates that he was well aware of the transition from the idea of painting from a manual activity to an intellectual pursuit. Many of his fundamental ideas about art seem to have been decisively shaped by the aesthetic and social perceptions that were cultivated in Rome at the time. I have systematically approached his artistic output in Rome as vivid 'ricordi' of his interaction with the city's culture, both visual and written, and I have also suggested that he was stimulated by the 'paragone' between sculpture and painting on the one hand, and between ancient and modern on the other. His Parma *Healing of the Blind* and the *Boy Lighting a Candle*, both listed in the Farnese inventories, suggest extensive knowledge of literary sources, and a creative process that involved conscious choices about what to use from a rich body of ancient texts and how to fuse them with his images. Similarly, his Minneapolis *Purification of the Temple* communicates his views on imitation and the ideal artist.

Other issues have also been discussed extensively in the study: for instance, did Domenicos' complex paintings manage to satisfy Cardinal Farnese? If not, why not, and how did his failure affect his stay at the cardinal's palace, and consequently in Rome? Answering these questions required a careful examination of the artist's way of thinking in relation to his role as painter and his esteem for the artistic process of making images. I maintain that Domenicos presented himself as an artist whose art involved learning as much as painting, and that this made him gradually more self-aware and competitive, leading him to think very highly of his output. Circumstantial evidence also suggests that he was increasingly reluctant to execute his works quickly, or at least as quickly as Cardinal Farnese wished. Although there are no documentary references to Domenicos' lack of speed of execution, the relatively

small number of pictures he painted in Rome, and his censure of Vasari's rapidity in bringing the Sala dei Cento Giorni to completion, are indicative of his attitude on this matter. The issue of *prestezza* was of great importance both to artists and writers in mid-sixteenth century Italy. Domenicos had gained first-hand experience of Titian's lack of *prestezza*, a quality lauded by important literary figures such as Pietro Bembo. And he had read Paolo Pino's censure of the rapidity of Tintoretto's associate Andrea Schiavone², as well as Ludovico Dolce's veiled criticism of Tintoretto's *prestezza del fatto*, as expressed in the *Dialogo della pittura, intitolato l'Aretino*, in 1557³. Current theories on art and contemporary discussions about the elevated social status of artists all contributed to El Greco's inclination to resist calls for rapidity of execution, and to regard a lengthier process as the result of a more intellectual engagement. Assuming that he valued his own art highly, as I have argued, this might explain why he got into so many legal disputes over finances with his patrons in Spain. Furthermore, his underlining of the account in Vasari's *Vite* about Apelles being paid twenty talents in gold for the portrait of Alexander the Great⁴ seems to confirm his ideas about artistic excellence and prestige. Evidently, Apelles, who was a powerful model for the socially ambitious artist, had a great impact on Domenicos.

The study has also considered the complex issue of El Greco's artistic activities following his dismissal from the Farnese household. The fact that the Cretan enrolled so quickly in the artists' guild after the abovementioned unfortunate event suggests that he had every intention of remaining in Rome. A considerable number of pictures listed in the inventory of the D'Este family, and hitherto ignored, seems to confirm my hypothesis that Domenicos, like Muziano, sought to sell his paintings to patrons not only in Rome, but also beyond. Once more it was through contacts made at the Farnese court, most probably Fulvio Orsini, that he gained access to important patrons such as the Duke of Ferrara. And the possibility of finding patronage abroad encouraged him to hire two pupil-assistants. It is to these peripheral and circumstantial details that I have looked to build up a picture of Domenicos as a more conventional painter than is usually thought, and they have proved a rich vein of information. While we cannot know exactly how El Greco organised his workshop in

² P. Pino, *Dialogo di pittura*, (1548), in *Trattati d'arte del Ciquecento: Fra Manierismo e Controriforma*, ed. P. Barocchi, Bari, 1960, vol. I, p. 119.

³ Tintoretto may be the unnamed painter attacked by Aretino, M.W. Roskill, *Dolce's 'Aretino' and the Venetian Art Theory of the Cinquecento*, New York, 1968, p. 131.

⁴ Marías, *El Greco y el arte de su tiempo*, Greek transl., p. 72.

Rome and what role these assistants had, I have demonstrated that he, like many of his peers, used a wide range of sixteenth-century Italian artistic trends, including using prints for compositional inspiration, retaining drawings of ancient monuments, and keeping replicas and ‘ricordi’ of his works.

His compositional and stylistic techniques are uniquely expressed in his Roman portraits, and I have analysed how his approach to portraiture entailed a sophisticated play between life-like representation and character, naturalism and psychological depth. My focus on his portraits during this period had two goals: first to suggest that his pictorial approach was shaped by humanistic ideas prevailing in Rome at the time; and secondly, to show that the painter aimed at an alignment of the outer appearance with the inner virtue of his sitters in a meaningful and highly original way. It is particularly interesting that he sought to convey the sitter’s qualities of character without recourse to emblems, signs and symbols. Unlike his rivals in this field, such as Scipione Pulzone, Domenicos used as few paraphernalia as possible, relying on simple motifs: a table, a book, a dark suit, an explicit gesture. Did Orsini’s approach to portraiture, as expressed in his *Imagines*, affect Domenicos’ artistic development in this field? An answer to this question may be suggested by the Copenhagen *Portrait of a Man*. Whether the sitter is Benito Arias Montano, as I have proposed, or not, this remarkable picture highlights Domenicos’ skill at fusing the lessons he learned in Rome. Here the painter has created an image of extreme simplicity, in which he represented, through the use of colours, a likeness of both the body and the mind of the sitter. Not only in his portraits, but in his whole Roman oeuvre, he seems to merge learning and art, words and images, scholarship and virtuosity, raising his status to that of a true intellectual. Not surprisingly, the same preoccupations are evident in pictures painted shortly after his arrival in Spain, such as the *Allegory of the Holy League* and the *Martyrdom of St. Maurice*, which betray the sophistication of his experience in Rome. As he was to write years later in the margins of Vitruvius’ treatise: art ‘that is more difficult is the most pleasant and, as a result, more intellectual’⁵.

⁵ Marías & Bustamante, *Las ideas artísticas*, p. 80: “el Arte que tenga más dificultades será la más agradable y por consecuencia más intelectual”.

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